THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

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NEARLY 12 CRORE DOSES WILL BE AVAILABLE IN JUNE: GOVT

Of the total, 6.09 crore doses would be allocated to states for free, while 5.86 crore could be directly procured by them

STATES TO GET FREE VAX SUPPLY SCHEDULE

The Centre said it would share the delivery schedule for the free doses in advance to ensure cohesion and better planning. The announcement came on a day when the Serum Institute wrote to the home ministry, assuring to supply 9-10 crore doses in June, a steep rise considering the company had in May said it would reach the 10-crore mark only by August/September

RAMPING UP VACCINE PRODUCTION

- Bharat Biotech, too, is ramping up production of Covaxin. Its tie-up with the Gujarat Covid Vaccine Consortium will raise its capacity to 10 crore doses by September from one crore in April
- Of the nearly 21 crore doses administered so far, around 18.5 crore are Covishield, while Covaxin's share has been around 3 crore

7.9 crore

DOSES WERE AVAILABLE IN THE COUNTRY DURING MAY

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • WARANGAL • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

ON COVID, NOTHING ASPIRATIONAL ABOUT DISTS CLASSIFIED AS SUCH

MANISH ANAND @ New Delhi

WITH greater focus on health, nutrition and education among others, 117 districts labeled aspirational in 2018 were supposed to set the benchmark for other districts "by competing with and learning from others".

Conventional wisdom dictated that these aspirational districts would have weathered the Covid-19 storm better than others, but a data analysis shows they have performed as poorly, if not worse, than any other in the country during the pandemic.

Take for instance Virudhunagar and Ramanathpuram in Tamil Nadu, ranked first and second by Niti Aayog, the institution that is driving the programme. Virudhunagar accounted for 388 deaths whereas 18 other districts in the state saw fewer deaths. YSR Kadappa, with health rank seven, reported 542 deaths in Andhra Pradesh.

Nandurbar in Maharashtra was ranked 95 among the aspirational districts. It reported 818 Covid deaths. Osmanabad, also in Maharashtra, saw 1,320 deaths. The district is ranked 20th. Their poor show is perhaps why on the seventh anniversary of the NDA at the Centre, two of the big slogans, aspirational districts and New India, are missing from the celebrations' lexicon.

Launched by Modi in January 2018, the drive was in line with the "New India vision by 2022." Health was listed as the first in a number of priority areas for the programme. "Health and nutrition, education, agriculture and water resources, financial inclusion and skill development, and basic infrastructure are this programme's core area of focus," says Niti Aayog in its website. Mandarins in the government and the think-tank had made such tall claims about these districts that there was a clamour among MPs for inclusion of their constituencies in the list. The largest concentration of aspirational districts is in Bihar, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh as the Centre had included a number of "left wing extremism" affected districts to showcase developmental approach against the Maoist violence.

Gaya, an LWE-affected district in Bihar, reported 185 Covid deaths whereas there were 20 districts in the state with fewer casualties. Among the non-LWE aspirational district in Bihar, Begusarai reported 125 deaths due to pandemic.The aspirational district tale is no different in UP, where Bahraich, Balrampur and Siddharthnagar are reporting high deaths. In Jharkhand, with 19 aspirational districts, the programme made no difference in mitigating the hardships of the people as Ranchi and East Singhbhum are reporting huge Covid death figures.

Ironically, the Aayog gives 30% weightage to health and nutrition while ranking the aspirational districts. It also lists big corporate names as partners for the programme.

HOW THEY FARE

Aspirational districts	Health rank	Total cases	Recovered	Dead
Virudhunagar (Tamil Nadu)	1	36,400	27,825	388
Ramnathpuram (Tamil Nadu)	2	16,179	12,681	211
YSR Kadappa (Andhra Pradesh)	7	93,709	88,112	542
Raichur (Karnataka)	11	37,521	31,943	264
Kanker (Chhattisgarh)	13	22,652	21,470	205
Banka (Bihar)	77	7,277	7,079	84
Begusarai (Bihar)	48	26,454	24609	125
Gaya (Bihar)	80	33,539	32,699	185
Bahraich (Uttar Pradesh)	89	11,267	10,644	170
Balrampur (Uttar Pradesh)	87	7,349	6,925	129
Siddharthnagar (Uttar Pradesh)	88	9,100	8,534	93
Osmanabad (Maharashtra)	20	57,060	51,712	1,320
Nandurbar (Maharashtra)	95	38,721	36,991	818
Rajgarh (Madhya Pradesh)	15	8,495	7,958	114
Damoh (Madhya Pradesh)	19	7,956	6,970	155
Ranchi (Jharkhand)	32	84,374	79,948	1,539
East Singhbhum (Jharkhand)	27	49,149	47,422	997

(Data as on May 29, 2021, taken from www.covid19india.org)

NATIONWIDE	MAY 29	MAY 30
Fresh cases	1,73,790	1,65,553
Recoveries	2,84,601	2,76,309
Deaths	3,617	3,460

JAB-O-METER
TAKE YOUR SHOT
May 29: 28,09,436 doses
May 30: 30,35,749 doses
TOTAL DOSES: 21,20,66,614

Window of credit guarantee opens for hospitals & aviation sector

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

IN what could be termed as the unveiling of a fresh round of its economic relief package, the government on Sunday expanded the scope of the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) to more sectors disrupted by the second wave of the pandemic. It will now cover medical colleges, hospitals, nursing homes and the aviation sector.

The ministry of finance also extended the validity of the scheme from June 30 to September 30, or till guarantees for an amount of ₹3 lakh crore has been issued. Disbursement under the scheme is permitted up to December 31, 2021.

The scheme announced in May 2020 aimed at giving up to ₹3 lakh crore unsecured loans to MSME and other sectors severely impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. The government provides guarantee against loans disbursed under the scheme. Earlier, the scheme covered MSMEs, hospitality, travel and tourism, leisure and sporting sectors, and 26 stressed sectors identified by the K V Kamath Committee.

The government has now allowed hospitals, nursing homes, clinics and medical colleges to avail loan up to ₹2 crore for setting up of on-site oxygen plants under ECLGS 4.0. The loan would be 100% guaranteed by the government. The interest rate on such loans has been capped at 7.5%.

The tenure of working capital loans provided to MSMEs under ECLGS 1.0 has been extended from four years to five years. Earlier, a moratorium of one year was given on principal repayment. Now it has been extended by a year. So MSMEs, which have availed loans under the scheme can now pay only the interest amount in the first two years and the rest of the interest and principal in the next three years.

Those MSMEs covered under ECLGS 1.0 can now avail additional loan up to 10% of the outstanding amount as on February 29, 2020. Earlier, they could avail loan up to 20% of their debt outstanding as on February 29, 2020.

The existing limit of ₹500 crore debt outstanding under ECLGS 3.0, which is for businesses from hospitality, travel and tourism, leisure and sporting sectors, has been removed.

However, the additional loan that can be availed has been limited to 40% (of debt outstanding) or ₹200 crore, whichever is lower.

Aviation has been included in the list of eligible sectors under ECLGS 3.0. Under ECLGS 2.0, 26 distressed sectors were eligible for a maximum of 20% of the debt outstanding as on February 29, 2020.

Meanwhile, Indian Banking Association Chief Executive Officer Sunil Mehta said so far ₹2.55 lakh crore has been sanctioned under the ECLGS scheme, of which ₹2.4 lakh crore has been disbursed.

Social security net for next of kin of workers succumbing to Covid

New Delhi: All dependent family members of insured persons under the ESIC who succumb to Covid, will be entitled to receive the same level of benefits as is given for death due to employment injury, the labour ministry said | P7

'India will win, howsoever big the challenge'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

WITH his monthly *Mann ki baat* coinciding with the seventh anniversary of his party's rule at the Centre, Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** on Sunday sought to convey a message of optimism, saying howsoever big the challenge, India will always emerge the winner.

He said it in the context of the pandemic and natural disasters, including cyclones Tauktae and Yaas. "However big the challenge be, India's victory resolve, her *vijay sankalp*, has always been equal in magnitude. Her collective strength and our spirit of service has always rescued the country from the midst of every storm," he said. Modi said in the last seven years, the country has followed the mantra of *Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas*, adding there were many moments of national pride during his government's tenure.

Claiming that in seven decades after Independence, only 3.5 crore rural homes had water connections, he said 4.5 crore houses have been given clean water connections in the last 21 months alone. Referring to the Covid challenge during the second wave, Modi said oxygen production has been ramped up in a big way. "In the normal course, we were producing 900 metric tonnes of liquid medical oxygen in a day. Today, the production has gone up to 9,500 metric tonnes a day," he said.

Daily caseload hits a new low in K'taka

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

THE daily number of Covid-19 positive cases is seeing a consistent decline, with Sunday witnessing an addition of 20,378 new cases — the lowest since April 19 when 15,785 cases were added in a day.

The state had seen 50,112 cases added in a day on May 5, which is the highest single-day addition that the state has seen since the beginning of the pandemic, followed by 49,058 on May 6 and 48,781 the next day. The state's Covid-19 tally stands at 25,87,827, but the positivity rate has been steadily rising since April 5, currently standing at 8.73 per cent, up from 8.71 per cent on Saturday. Bengaluru saw 4,734 new cases in the day, taking the city's tally up to 11,59,237.

The active cases have been consistently decreasing and now stands at 3,42,010 in Karnataka and 1,62,625 in Bengaluru. The discharges have also been increasing since April 26, with 28,053 people recovering on May 30, taking the recovery rate to 85.67 per cent. The recovery rate has been improving since May 12, without a break, from 70.16 per cent on that day. However, Sunday's discharges were far below the highest that the state had witnessed on May 22 with 61,766 being discharged in a day, followed by 58,395 on May 18, and 57,333 on May 24.

The deaths have, however, been rising since April 5 and 382 fatalities were reported on Sunday, taking the state's toll to 28,679 and mortality rate to 1.10 per cent. In Bengaluru, 213 deaths pushed the mortality rate to 1.13 per cent, and its toll to 13,104.

Meanwhile, Health Minister Dr K Sudhakar said as people are seeing the benefits of the lockdown, Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa will take a decision on whether lockdown extension is needed or not after consulting the Covid-19 Technical Advisory Committee.

A health worker collects a nasal swab sample from a food delivery agent, as part of the Covid testing drive, in Bengaluru on Sunday | ASHISHKRISHNA HP

Black fungus cases shoot up to 1,250 in state

The number of mucormycosis (black fungus) cases is climbing, with a total of 1,250 patients getting infected since the second wave began. While 18 patients have been discharged so far, 39 have succumbed, and 1,193 are still under treatment. According to a health department bulletin, the majority of cases are from Bengaluru Urban (521), followed by Dharwad (119) and Kalaburagi (102). Just a week ago, Health Minister Dr K Sudhakar said there were over 400 fungus cases in the state. P4

KARNATAKA	MAY 29	MAY 30
Fresh cases	20,628	20,378
Recoveries	42,444	28,053
Deaths	492	382

300% spike in Covid cases across Assam's tea gardens

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Kolkata

AT a time when the national daily case count is steadily easing, the tea gardens in Assam seem to be bucking the trend by registering a whopping 300% spike in infection in 10 days among the workers.

The number of cases in 220 estates stood at 1,851 with 14 fatalities on May 19. By May 28, the numbers soared to 6,146 spread over 370 estates with 43 deaths, prodding the state government on Saturday to sanction walk-in jabs for the workers in 18-44 age group.

The efficacy of the walk-in drive, however, is doubtful as CM Himanta Biswa Sarma on Sunday said the state was low on stocks and the arrival of the next tranche was a week away.

As of now, the affected tea estate's labour lines, where workers are lodged, have been declared containment zones, with the patients being sent to Covid care facilities on the estate. However, not all estates are equipped with care centres, with only 271 having them.

FIRE-FIGHTING

Rescue ships, including those of Indian Coast Guard, fighting flames to salvage container vessel MV X-Press Pearl, off Colombo port, on Sunday. The vessel has been burning for 11 consecutive days | AFP

MONSOON DELAYED?

The IMD on Sunday said the southwest monsoon will arrive in Kerala after a two-day delay on June 3. The forecast was in contrast to private weather monitoring agency Skymet's report, which claimed the rain bearing winds made soft landfall in Kerala on Sunday

EXPRESS READ

Sasikala hints at political comeback

Chennai: V K Sasikala, eased out from the AIADMK years ago, has hinted at resumption of efforts to regain control of the party, and a political comeback. Her brief conversation with two of her loyalists over phone has surfaced, which has dropped hints about her rethink on the matter | P5

Bengaluru's Fouaad seals Olympic spot

Bengaluru: India's Fouaad Mirza managed to confirm his Tokyo Olympics spot by completing the Minimum Eligibility Requirements (MERs) and finishing second and third on his horses Seigneur Medicott and Dajara 4 respectively in the CCI44*-Long eventing competition in Poland. | P11

WITH THIS ISSUE THE ESSENTIAL CAMPUS DIGEST edex YOUR LIFE COACH
32 PAGES, INCLUDING 16 OF EDEX (TABLOID), 4 OF CITY EXPRESS

FRUIT OF INNOVATION

When life gives you melons, make jaggery out of it!

MARX TEJASWI @ Shivamogga

IN these times of distress, especially for farmers with large amounts of produce and no takers, here is a hotelier-and-agriculturist from Shivamogga district who has come out with a "sweet" solution to tide over the crisis.

Jayaram Shetty, who has grown watermelon in eight acres of land at Nittur in Hosanagara taluk, has hit upon an idea of making jaggery from the sweet fruit. The method he uses is exactly like how jaggery is extracted from sugarcane which is the traditional way.

The 42-year-old Jayaram, who was running a hotel in Mumbai and was living in the metropolis for 30 years, returned to his village last year during the lockdown, and started cultivating his family land. Now, running a hotel at Nittur, he told *TNIE*, "We grew watermelon in four acres of land last year, but there were no takers because of the restrictions. Finally, some traders from Kerala purchased the stock at ₹4 per kg, which was very low. That is when I and my staff at the hotel extracted the jaggery. We used it in some dishes and we liked it. This year, I grew watermelon on my four acres and also another four acres of my friend's farm. But traders wanted it for ₹1 per kg, and I decided to make more jaggery this year."

Explaining the process, he said that juice is extracted from the fruit and filtered twice. The juice is then boiled for four hours or till it becomes thick. Around 75 kg of jaggery can be extracted from one tonne of watermelon.

He said, "I have a stock of 250 kg of jaggery now. But I am not sure of its shelf life, It has continued to taste good even after five days. If one wants to keep it longer, they can store it in a refrigerator."

Shetty requested the government to conduct more research on his process and make it a commercial success. "Then, a large number of farmers will benefit," he said.

Last year, some traders from Kerala purchased the (watermelon) stock at ₹4 per kg, which was very low. That is when I and my staff at the hotel extracted the jaggery – Jayaram Shetty, Hotelier-and-Agriculturist

ALMANAC TODAY

• **Monday :** 31/05/2021 • **Year:** Plava • **Ayana:** Uttharayana • **Ritu:** Vasantha • **Masa:** Vaishaka • **Paksha:** Krishna • **Tithi:** Panchami 6.52 am • **Nakshatra:** Shravana 8.49 am • Moon in Kumbha Rashi • **Rahukaala:** 07:30 am to 09:00 am • **Gulikakala:** 01:30 pm to 03:00 pm • **Yamaganda:** 10:30 am to 12:00 pm

WEATHER

MIN 26°C | MAX 31°C

FORECAST
Rain showers. Afternoon clouds

Sunrise 5.52 am
Sunset 6.42 pm
Moonrise 11.44 pm
Moonset 10.36 am

COMPLAINTS GALORE

Even a slot on CoWIN won't guarantee a jab

Even though portal confirms details, citizens say health centres do not have vaccine stock

A senior citizen gets a Covid vaccine shot in Bengaluru | EXPRESS

RANJANI MADHAVAN @ Bengaluru

AFTER much trouble, you may have finally been successful in booking a slot for vaccination on the CoWIN portal. But even that does not assure you of a Covid-19 vaccine jab. Citizens are complaining that though the portal confirms the venue, date and time, they don't get a jab when they go there.

Recently, Lakshman Raju, booked a slot for his mother, aged above 55, and got a confirmation message for the jab to be taken between 2 pm and 4 pm at a primary health centre in Vidyaranyapura. "When we went to the location, they said they are vaccinating only those who are due for the second dose. They should have a disclosure on the CoWIN portal so we do not go to the spot and wait needlessly," Raju rued.

Mithun Gangadhar had a similar experience on Friday. He was given a slot between 10 am and 11 am for vaccinating his mother. When he went to the Anganwadi in Ramamurthy Nagar, about 5 km from his house in Kasturi Nagar, he was informed that they did not have stock. "They should have informed us in advance. There was no place to sit or park my vehicle. Now, I plan to get the jab through my office for my mother, my wife and myself," Gangandhar said.

Similarly, Sunitha booked a slot on CoWIN on May 4 at a PHC in Banashankari. When she got there, she was told that there was no stock. "The staff there said even though the Arogya Setu portal shows slots are available, they don't have vaccine stocks," Sunitha said.

BBMP Health Commissioner Rajendra Cholan said there is sufficient stock of vaccines and each day, 200 doses are given per ward for the 45+ age group from the 40,000-45,000 vials allocated by the State Government. And, 40 per cent of it is used for the second dose and the remaining for the first dose.

"There is a shortage of Covaxin, but not Covishield. We inform the PHC beforehand if there is no stock, so they can put up a board to inform citizens. The slots are pre-booked on CoWIN. So, on the day of vaccination, the status of the stock may be different. There is no option on CoWIN to put any disclaimer," Cholan said.

Volunteers become bridge between hospitals, patients

IFFATH FATHIMA @Bengaluru

EVEN a small help can go a long way – this is the belief of the Bangalore for Migrants, a group of seven volunteers who have become a lifeline for many patients caught in the Covid wave. From starting a crowd-funding initiative to buy high-duty ventilators to arranging beds and oxygen cylinders for patients and even helping some pay their medical bills, the group members have been doing all that they can to aid people in the thick of the pandemic.

The members cut their teeth during the first wave of the pandemic, helping migrant labourers hard-hit by the lockdown with food packages. Now, in the second wave, they have gone a step ahead and are helping hospitals and patients with their services.

Shelling out money from their own pockets, the team has, so far, procured four non-invasive ventilators – which comes up to Rs 45,000 for each member -- dialysis machines, 10 ICU beds as well as15 oxygen cylinders and nine concentrators. And they donated the equipment to some small private hospitals in the city. The group has also started a free ambulance service with three vehicles. Also, they recently raised Rs 20 lakh through a crowd-funding initiative and procured two high-duty ventilators, which they donated to a private hospital.

Apart from all these, the team has also been helping patients pay their hospital bills and buy medicines. "Since we have been helping in arranging hospitals beds, many relatives of patients have our numbers and call us if they cannot pay the medical bills. We help them pay their bills from our own pockets, or sometimes, friends and other families pitch in too. Sometimes, people do not want to go to the hospital as they are short of cash, but we tell them we can manage the expenses. Once they recover, they thank us and we are just happy that we have saved a life," said Saqib Idrees, entrepreneur and member of Bangalore for Migrants.

The group has donated over a 1,000 grocery kits to the needy and 25-30,000 cooked meals in a month, said Usman Sharieff, secretary of Jumma Masjid Trust Board and part of the group. "We are just doing what we can. Many are hard hit during these times and all we can do is help. We have managed funds and procured medical equipment for hospitals in our capacity."

They are now preparing for the third wave and talking to various paediatric hospitals to help them in procuring paediatric ICU beds or ventilators.

We were a little behind during the second wave. In the third wave, we are planning ahead. Member of Parliament Naseer Hussain is helping us in approaching paediatricians – Saqib Idrees, Bangalore for Migrants

Saqib Idrees, member of Bangalore for Migrants collects swab samples from migrant labourers | EXPRESS

IN THE HOT SEAT

PM dials Bengaluru loco pilot to laud her for steering Oxygen Express

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

IT was a proud and nervy two minutes for Bengaluru Division's Loco Pilot (LP) Sireesha Gajini on Saturday night when she received a call from Prime Minister Narendra Modi that was later relayed in his 'Mann Ki Baat' programme. The first woman to be in the driver's seat of an Oxygen Express for Karnataka was inside the local All India Radio station to record the call. She was alerted by the Prime Minister's Office a day earlier that Modi was keen to feature her.

The 2 minute and 8 second conversation in Hindi was up on Sunday morning on radio and TV channels, getting this railway employee from Visakhapatnam a nationwide recognition. Her mother G Rajeshwari was among those hooked to the radio back home at Seethamadhara.

An all-woman crew of 31-year-old Gajini, a B.Tech graduate with eight years of experience, and Assistant Loco Pilot Aparna RP were in the driver's cabin of the 7th Oxygen Express from Jharkhand on May 21. They took over the train with 120 MT of liquid medical oxygen at Jolarpettai station and steered it to the Whitefield depot.

Sireesha Gajini is the first woman in Karnataka to pilot the Oxygen Express

The New Indian Express was the only newspaper to feature the first woman in the loco cabin of an Oxygen Express, Assistant Loco Pilot Neelam Kumari.

Modi's call began with a ₹namaste' to her and an appreciation of many women, including Sireesha, who are at the forefront of fight against coronavirus. Calling her an embodiment of Nari Shakti, the PM asked, "The country would like to know and I also want to know from where you got the motivation for it?" Gajini replied, "My father and mother. My father encouraged me completely." Her father, Late Rama Rao, retired as an Assistant Secretary at the Port Trust of India.

The PM also asked, "You have operated trains generally but when oxygen in in such huge demand and when you are carrying oxygen, it must be a task with slightly more responsibility. What is your experience?" Gajini replied when the Oxygen Express was handed over to her, everything was checked from safety, formation to leakage. "Indian Railways is supportive and created a green path for it. I completed 125 km in one and a half hours. Railways also took the responsibility and I also shouldered the responsibility."

Later, she told *TNIE*, "I was happy and filled with pride. I had prepared all that I wanted to speak in advance, but was a bit tense when the PM's call came and forgot a few things I wanted to say!"

Smoking makes it harder to fight Covid-19: Doctor

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

TOBACCO is a known risk factor for many respiratory infections and its usage increases the severity of respiratory diseases, said Dr C Ramachandra, director of Kidwai Memorial Institute of Oncology.

In a press release issued to mark the World No Tobacco Day (May 31), Dr Ramachandra said, "Covid-19 is an infectious disease that primarily attacks the lungs and smoking impairs lung functioning making it harder for the body to fight coronavirus and other diseases."

A review of studies by public health experts convened by the World Health Organisation on April 29 last year found that smokers were more likely to develop severe disease with Covid-19 compared to non-smokers. "Tobacco is also a major risk factor for non-communicable diseases like cardiovascular disease, cancer, respiratory disease and diabetes which put people with these conditions at a higher risk of developing severe illness when affected by Covid-19," said Dr Ramachandra, adding that available research suggests that smokers are at higher risk of developing severe disease and leading to death.

He added that WHO urges researchers, scientists and the media to be cautious about amplifying unproven claims that tobacco or nicotine could reduce the risk of Covid-19.

There is insufficient information to confirm any link between tobacco/nicotine in the prevention or treatment of Covid-19 as it is being claimed, the note further read.

Over 3,000 cases of tobacco-related cancers are registered in Kidwai each year. Most of these cases seek cancer care at an advanced stage of disease where curative treatment is elusive. According to the Bangalore Population Based Cancer Registry, the average age adjusted incidence rate of tobacco-related cancer is 40 per 1,00,000 persons among men and 21 per 1,00,000 persons among women.

Daily Starscope

PETER VIDAL

31st May: The current Jupiterian alignments are a herald of freedom. Let me explain. Jupiter is a planet of freedom which stimulates enterprise and individuality. It encourages people everywhere to break out of ruts, challenge convention and overturn the old order. If you're a natural conservative and hate change, keep your head down!

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr. 20)
Whatever partners may say, there seems little danger that you will become too demanding in your approach. Professional efforts and expertise will soon begin to pay off in increased earnings, but only once partners have settled down. A younger relation may have the best advice, so listen carefully and learn well.

TAURUS (Apr. 21 - May 21)
You should no longer need to distance yourself from situations which have churned up your emotions or made you feel victimised. Extraordinarily ambitious aspects will give you a fresh and exciting attitude, but naturally are likely to bring extra commitments, so get ready!

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)
You must be prepared to take a more relaxed attitude to matrimonial and private affairs. It is important that you follow your dreams; do not give too much weight to practical concerns, but give proper moral consideration to all difficult questions.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)
You are coping well with partnerships, including relationships with colleagues at work, when all is said and done. Take encouragement from the fact that disturbing and perhaps underhand events have almost run their course, and don't shrink from facing up to the past at home.

LEO (July 24 - Aug. 23)
The important thing is to remember that while one line of development in career matters is now well under way, another is only just beginning to move. The situation is quite complicated, yet definitely favourable. You just have to recognise that partners hold the trump cards.

VIRGO (Aug. 24 - Sept. 23)
Close companions are ready to move forward, but it is up to you to give your approval - together with assurances that you are ready to offer a practical hand. Your ideas will be welcomed if you put them over with style - and a willingness to take a totally new approach.

LIBRA (Sept. 24 - Oct. 23)
So much appears to have changed in your innermost thoughts and emotions that you may be quite justified in feeling slightly disorientated. However, now you must concentrate on matters in hand, such as financial arrangements and sorting out your investments or savings.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24 - Nov. 22)
In some senses, current planetary aspects are sufficient to try the patience of a saint, and you may have to put up with other people who think they know it all. However, once you talk about contentious issues, you'll be surprised how quickly an amicable agreement is reached.

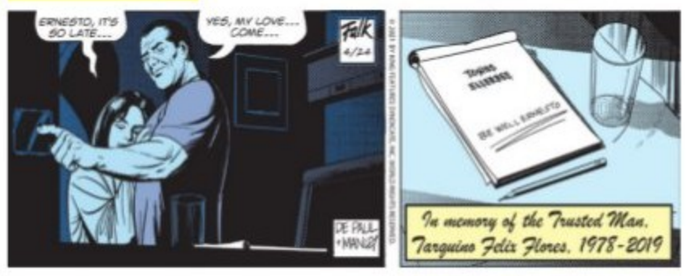
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 - Dec. 22)
It's because Jupiter is still occupying a dominant position that you believe others have the right to make you accept whatever they offer. Yet you may still question their terms without fear of being thought ungrateful. In other words, don't take whatever you're offered just because it's there.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 23 - Jan. 20)
Your planets are encouraging you to make a few bold moves and decisions, instead of waiting for others to make their intentions plain. Remember that love is a more powerful motivation than self-interest, so give first and you'll receive later.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 - Feb. 19)
Play for time if you feel ill-at-ease or unhappy about an offer. Pluto is warning you that, even though favourable conditions seem set to continue, anything which affects your deepest emotional security must be handled with your usual sensitivity.

PISCES (Feb. 20 - Mar 20)
It would be unwise to imagine that everyone is completely happy with your progress so far. You must take pains to explain yourself fully and make sure that colleagues are under no misapprehension concerning your plans. It may not be possible to be completely open just yet, but at least you can try.

THE PHANTOM



HI AND LOIS

BEETLE BAILEY

BLONDIE

BOY, THOSE OLD TV WESTERNS ARE GREAT, AREN'T THEY, DAD?
YEP!
HAVE YOU EVER NOTICED THAT THEIR COWBOY SHIRTS ALWAYS LOOK SO FRESHLY LAUNDERED?
I THOUGHT YOU WERE GOING TO BINGE-WATCH SOME OF YOUR FAVORITE WESTERNS
ALEXANDER TOOK THE MAGIC OUT OF 'EM

LOCKHORNS

DENNIS THE MENACE

SUDOKU

Easy: Test your number crunching skill with our unique puzzle

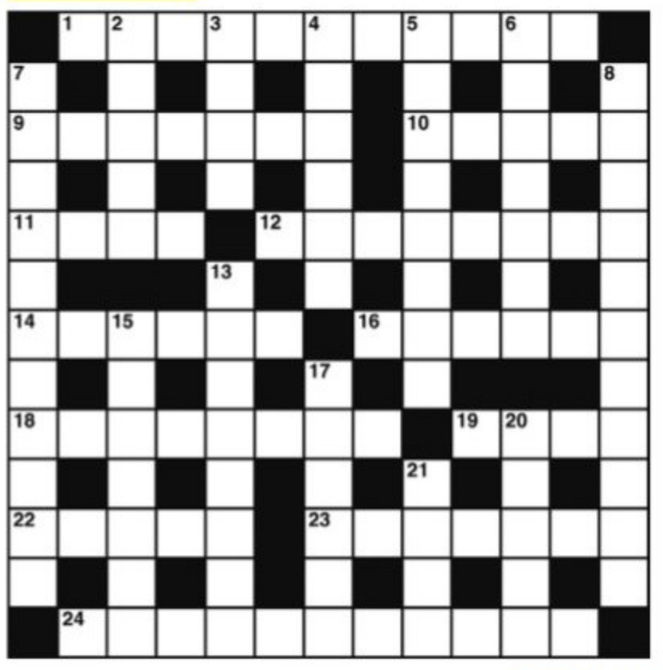
Fill in the grid with digits in such a manner that every row, every column and every 3X3 box accommodates the digits 1 to 9, without repeating any.

9	3				8	1	2	7
	5			2		6		
		2	1		7	3	4	
							8	1
		3				5		
7	2							
	6	8	9		1	4		
		1		3			6	
5	4	9	6				1	3

Solutions to Saturday's puzzle

5	8	3	7	4	9	2	1	6
7	2	1	5	6	3	4	8	9
6	9	4	1	8	2	3	7	5
9	7	6	4	1	5	8	3	2
2	3	5	9	7	8	6	4	1
1	4	8	3	2	6	5	9	7
3	1	7	2	5	4	9	6	8
8	5	9	6	3	7	1	2	4
4	6	2	8	9	1	7	5	3

CROSS WORD



ACROSS

1 Lose one's grip and decide to take no further action (4,3,4)
9 Hurried so curry is spoilt (7)
10 A fabulous writer takes a retrospective pose (5)
11 It flows out of line (4)
12 An event for wine people (4,4)
14 Decline with little hesitation (6)
16 Impressionist Renoir reproduction? (6)
18 Close of play (8)
19 I study Russian art (4)
22 Not the best man to take care of horses (5)
23 Hear Thai wraps chopped lamb dish (7)
24 No more stars for stargazers (11)

DOWN

2 Country river - a Russian river (5)
3 Ring up Winnie (4)
4 Call attention to 24-hour period of prosperity (6)
5 Crazy people eat them with cheese (8)
6 Keep us up to the mark (7)
7 Admit the account needs information (11)
8 It pays an actor to keep them up (11)
13 He likes to make things better for an anagrammatist (8)
15 Disport around the photographer's equipment (7)
17 Some insult angers the ruler (6)
20 Seat of learning? (5)
21 I'm a leader of Muslims (4)

SATURDAY'S SOLUTIONS

Across: 1 Bumper, 4 Crossbow, 9 Rarest, 10 Wayfarer, 12 Nuts, 13 Relay, 14 Raise, 17 Short circuit, 20 Posted abroad, 23 Ache, 24 Faint, 25 Skye, 28 Appendix, 29 Humane, 30 Indigent, 31 Zealot.

Down: 1 Baroness, 2 Marathon, 3 Easy, 5 Road accident, 6 Soft, 7 Barsac, 8 Warren, 11 Registration, 15 Stood, 16 Limbo, 18 Cocktail, 19 Adherent, 21 Salami, 22 Shaped, 26 Snug, 27 Ruse.

JUMBLE By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek

Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

THHCA

EUGGO

NRREOY

NFTIEI

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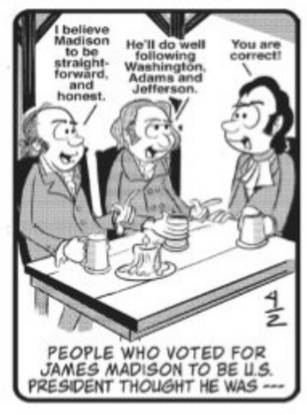
I believe Madison to be straightforward, and honest.
He'll do well following Washington, Adams and Jefferson.
You are correct!
PEOPLE WHO VOTED FOR JAMES MADISON TO BE U.S. PRESIDENT THOUGHT HE WAS ---

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon

" ○○○○○○○ - ○○○○○○ "

ANSWERS TOMORROW

SATURDAY'S: **Jumbles:** FAUNA IMPEL MEDIUM LOATHE
ANSWER: By not being late with payments, your credit score will go up – ALL IN DUE TIME

CCB officials on Saturday arrested a gang of four and averted a possible gang-war. Officials seized lethal weapons, which the gang was going to use to allegedly kill a history-sheeter Rohith, who was recently out of jail. The accused, K Soma, 41, a notorious history-sheeter, and his associates -- Madhusudhan (24), Sumanth Kumar (30), and Muniyallappa (34) -- are residents of Varthur

TOUGH CALL

BSY: No decision yet on lockdown extension

Says talks under way to announce new set of relief schemes

Police stop motorists during the lockdown in Mysuru on Sunday | UDAYSHANKAR S

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

EVEN as his cabinet colleagues like Home Minister Basavaraj Bommai and Revenue Minister R Ashok have been hinting at an extension of the ongoing lockdown, Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa on Sunday clarified that no such recommendation has been made by the Technical Advisory Committee.

Karnataka is currently under a partial lockdown that will be in place till June 7. While ministers have been suggesting that the lockdown may have to be extended if the Covid positivity rate in the State does not drop below 10 per cent, the CM said that any decision on the extension will be taken around June 5 and discussion on the matter is under way.

He added that discussions were also under way to announce a new set of schemes under the economic relief package to assist those who have lost jobs and their source of income due to the lockdown. The government had announced a Rs-1,250 crore financial assistance package earlier in May.

"A decision in this regard will be taken based on the prevailing situation on June 6, a day before the lockdown ends," Yediyurappa said.

Cases are still higher than our expectation. We will hold a meeting with ministers and experts on June 5 or 6 to chart out the future course of action

BS Yediyurappa, Chief Minister

To a question on whether the TAC has recommended extending the lockdown, the Chief Minister responded in the negative. "Discussions are on. After June 5 and 6, we have to wait and watch how the cases come down," he added while admitting that infections are still on the higher side.

"The cases are still higher than our expectation. We will hold a meeting with ministers and experts on June 5 or 6 to chart out the future course of action. However, we have not taken any decision yet," Yediyurappa said.

C'ballapur likely to go for 3rd total lockdown

Chikballapur: The district administration is likely to take a decision on third complete lockdown for three to four days to contain the spread of the virus in rural areas of the district. Speaking to The New Indian Express, Deputy Commissioner R Latha said complete lockdown implemented twice in the district resulted in the decline of cases. "At present, positivity rate of the infections stands at 15 per cent. We are keen on bringing down to 5 per cent," she said.

Plea to CM: Allow industry to reopen from June 1

Bengaluru: Karnataka Employers' Association president B C Prabhakar on Sunday wrote to Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa, urging him to permit them to resume operations from June 1, considering it was adversely affecting people's livelihood. He said industries in the state had complied with the strict lockdown guidelines, and any extension beyond June 1 would pose a huge financial setback and put in jeopardy, the livelihood of thousands of workmen and employees connected with industry. Prabhakar said that Karnataka is the hub of many "essential components" for the entire nation, and while manufacturers have been allowed to keep operations open in other states, only Karnataka was hindered by the lockdown. He pointed out that many industries feared that their orders could be routed to units outside the state.

Covid sewa marks 7 years of Modi govt

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa hands out rations to a pourakarmika in Bengaluru on Sunday | EXPRESS

MUTED celebrations marked the completion of seven years in office of the NDA government headed by PM Narendra Modi.

State BJP president Nalin Kumar Kateel told *TNIE* on Sunday that the party had instructed its cadres not to hold ostentatious celebrations, keeping the Covid-19 pandemic in mind. Across the state, cadres offered 'Covid Sewa', distributing food kits, medicines, masks or sanitiser to the people, and also planting saplings.

One lakh villages across the nation were chosen for Covid Sewa, which include 10,000 villages in Karnataka. Kateel said these camps will see only a handful of people participating. He said the Yuva Morcha, Mahila Morcha and other morchas would hold blood donation camps over a period of three days. He said the celebrations are an opportunity to perform Covid Sewa.

Wherever children are orphaned by Covid, money would be collected and deposited in the children's accounts, and the child will be allowed to use the interest. In Bantwal, Dakshina Kannada district, the party collected Rs 25 lakh for one child, as a part of Kshema Nidhi, he said.

On Sunday, Home Minister Basavaraj Bommai joined BDA chairman SR Vishwanath at a celebration in Yelahanka constituency, as Covid Sewa Divas. They identified frontline workers like pourakarmikas, ASHA staffers and other Covid warriors, and presented them with Covid kits.

Doctors, nurses appeal to govt for help

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru\Mysuru:

THE medical fraternity of Karnataka is deeply upset and claims that the government has let down this section of frontline workers.

Doctors and nurses say that they have worked without a break ever since the pandemic broke out, and while many contracted the virus, many have died. Many others are having to deal with prolonged illness, mental health and emotional issues. Despite all their sacrifices, the government has not come forward to foot their medical expenses. The fraternity has expressed unhappiness and despair on social media platforms, pointing out the government's apathy towards medical staffers.

A doctor highlighted one such case. "Recently, a registrar of a medical hospital, who was working non-stop, contracted Covid whose situation required an Ecmo procedure. He was transferred to a tertiary care centre and expenditure was beyond his means."

The doctors want to know if the government will help with tangible financial assistance.

DKS tweets to KTR, gets body released

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Hyderabad

THE Karnataka Congress president **DK Shivakumar**, reached out over Twitter to Telangana IT Minister, KT Rama Rao on Sunday, seeking help for the family of a woman from Mandya, facing trouble at a private hospital in Hyderabad. Tagging Rama Rao on Twitter at 6.45pm, Shivakumar asked for his interventon to help for the family of Shashikala Manjunath from Mandya, whose husband died at Medicover hospital but the hospital was not ready to release the body because the family had paid only Rs 2 lakh of the total bill amount of Rs 7.5 lakh. Within three hours the problem was solved, as Shivakumar Tweeted out thanks to Rama Rao at 9.28pm saying, "Grateful to Telangana CM KCR Garu, @KTR & @KTRoffice for their help in releasing the body of the deceased person.Also appreciate the efforts of @IYC workers for their timely action to help the distressed family aftr being notified & the hospital authorities for their cooperation."(sic)

BJP MLAs with CM, seek Yogeeshwara's expulsion

ANUSHA RAVI @Bengaluru

IN a clear and loud message of support to Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa, 18 BJP MLAs visited his official residence on Sunday afternoon. While the meeting was held under the official pretext of 'Covid-19 situation review', the MLAs, led by CM's political secretary MP Renukacharya, minced no words in acknowledging that the meeting was to show solidarity with the Chief Minister, in the context of cabinet minister CP Yogeeshwara making public attacks against him.

"We have asked the CM to expel Yogeeshwara from the cabinet immediately. He is an 'import' into the party, and the party is not dependent on him. How dare he attack the Chief Minister personally and talk about leadership change? We will stand by the Chief Minister, no matter what. MLAs of the BJP are with BS Yediyurappa," Renukacharya told TNIE. The meeting assumes importance, coming at a time when BJP circles are abuzz with news of state leaders demanding a change of guard, and lobbying for a new chief minister with the Central leadership. Yediyurappa is said to have asked the MLAs to wait for action to follow, citing the Covid situation assuming prominence.

"Eshwarappa wrote to the Governor over his ministry's concerns. He is an original BJP leader, unlike CP Yogeeshwara, who lost an election but was still given a ministry. Personal attacks should not go unpunished," Renukacharya added.

MLAs who visited Yediyurappa as a symbol of their loyalty included Raju Gouda, Masale Jayaram, Niranjan Kumar, Dr Shivraj Patil, Virupakshappa Ballari, MP Kumaraswamy, Basavaraj Dadesugur, among others.

EXPRESS READ

Nano urea to enter market, cut import bill

Bengaluru: In a fortnight, the Central government will introduce a new product, 'nano urea', developed by Indian Farmers Fertilisers' Cooperative, which will help India reduce its urea import bill. The bill stood at a whopping $2300 million recently. Chemicals and Fertilisers Minister D V Sadananda Gowda said the product will help increase yield and will be cost-effective.The minister said that nano urea, developed by public sector fertiliser producer IFFCO, will create a revolution in the agriculture sector. The minister informed that nano urea will enter the market on June 15, and will cost Rs 240 for 500ml.Nano urea is said to be environment-friendly and cuts input cost of farmers by 15 per cent. Apart from enriching the soil, this product will increase yield by 15 to 20 per cent. The country needs 350 lakh tonnes of urea every year. Introduction of nano urea is likely to reduce usage of ordinary urea, saving Rs 600 crore in subsidy given by the government. The country's dependence on urea import is also expected to come down.

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SOUTHERN RAILWAY
MATERIALS MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT
CENTRAL WORKSHOPS, PONMALAI, TRICHY – 620 004
E – Tender Notice for the supply of Stores – No.GOC/Stores/E/19/2021

The following e-tender has been published in IREPS website. Firms are requested to Login to **http://www.ireps.gov.in**->login->E.Tender-> Goods & Services (New) and quote against the tender. Manual quotations will not be entertained. Closing time : 14:30 hours

Tender No.: 52215466
Description: ONE COACH SET OF 160KN AIR SPRING ASSEMBLY
Due date : 22-JUNE-2021
Attention : Micro Small Medium Enterprises [MSMEs]. The benefits provided to MSMEs under Public Procurement Policy for goods and services are as per details provided in the link **http://www.ireps.gov.in** -> ireps public documents -> Southern Railway

Dy. Chief Materials Manager, Goldenrock

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SOUTHERN RAILWAY
(Construction Organization)
METROPOLITAN TRANSPORT PROJECT (RAILWAYS)/CHENNAI
Tirumailai Station Building, Mylapore, Chennai-600 004
TENDER NOTICE NO. MTMY-BBQ-01-2021 dt 25.05.2021.

For and on behalf of President of India, the Dy. Chief Engineer, Metropolitan Transport Project Railways. Tirumailai Station Building, Mylapore, Chennai-600 004, invites e-tender for the following work as per Notice inviting Tender (NIT) in our portal **www.ireps.gov.in** The tenderer's/Contractor's intending to apply for the tender needs to get enrolled in the portal **www.ireps.gov.in** and only online tenders will be accepted.

Name of Work: Basin Bridge Yard-Integrated coach Maintenance facilities including EOG LHB coaches (P.B. No.1001 of 2019-2020) - Proposed construction of LT switch room for 11 KV 750V compact substation at Basin Bridge Coaching Yard
Approximate Tender value: ₹ 96,23,362/-
Earnest Money Deposit : Nil
Period of Completion in Month(s): 06 Months
e-Tender Closing / Opening date & time : 17.06.2021 @ 15.00 Hours

For further details contact office of the Dy. Chief Engineer, Tirumailai Station Building, Mylapore, Chennai-600 004, or refer/ download tender document which is available on Internet site **www.ireps.gov.in**

Dy. Chief Engineer/MTP(R)/MTMY

Follow us on : twitter.com/GMSRailway

DEMAND NOTICE

Under Section 13(2) of the Securitisation And Reconstruction of Financial Assets And Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (the said Act.) read with Rule 3 (1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 (the said Rules). In exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) of the said Act read with Rule 3 of the said Rules, the Authorised Officer of IIFL Home Finance Ltd.(IIFL HFL) (Formerly known as India India Infoline Housing Finance Ltd.) has issued Demand Notices under section 13(2) of the said Act, calling upon the Borrower(s), to repay the amount mentioned in the respective Demand Notice(s) issued to them. In connection with above, notice is hereby given, once again, to the Borrower(s) to pay within 60 days from the publication of this notice, the amounts indicated herein below, together with further interest from the date(s) of Demand Notice till the date of payment. The detail of the Borrower(s), amount due as on date of Demand Notice and security offered towards repayment of loan amount are as under:-

Name of the Borrower(s), /Guarantor (s)	Demand Notice Date & Amount	Description of secured asset (immovable property)
Mr. Vishwanath M Bhat, Mrs. Geetha Vishwanath Bhat (Prospect No. 824292)	26-May-2021 Rs. 26,12,354.00/- (Rupees Twenty Six Lakh Twelve Thousand Three Hundred Fifty Four Only)	All that piece and parcel of the property being :Flat Bearing No.206, Second Floor, Survey No.14/1, BBMP Khatha No.1902/14/1, admeasuring 1008 Sft of SBA and 264.499 Sft of UDS, Situated at Nandini Temple View, Gubbalala Village, Uttarahalli Hobli, Bangalore South Taluk, Bangalore, Karnataka

If the said Borrowers fail to make payment to IIFL HFL as aforesaid, IIFL HFL may proceed against the above secured assets under Section 13(4) of the said Act, and the applicable Rules, entirely at the risks, costs and consequences of the Borrowers. For, further details please contact to Authorised Officer at Branch Office : IIFL HFL I"ADAM CHAMBERS," #11, Richmond Road, Bengaluru - 560025/or Corporate Office : IIFL Tower, Plot No. 98, Udyog Vihar, Ph-IV Gurgaon, Haryana.
Place: Bangalore Date: 31.05.2021 Sd/- Authorised Officer, For IIFL Home Finance Ltd

DEMAND NOTICE

Under Section 13(2) of the Securitisation And Reconstruction of Financial Assets And Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (the said Act.) read with Rule 3 (1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 (the said Rules). In exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) of the said Act read with Rule 3 of the said Rules, the Authorised Officer of IIFL Home Finance Ltd.(IIFL HFL) (Formerly known as India India Infoline Housing Finance Ltd.) has issued Demand Notices under section 13(2) of the said Act, calling upon the Borrower(s), to repay the amount mentioned in the respective Demand Notice(s) issued to them. In connection with above, notice is hereby given, once again, to the Borrower(s) to pay within 60 days from the publication of this notice, the amounts indicated herein below, together with further interest from the date(s) of Demand Notice till the date of payment. The detail of the Borrower(s), amount due as on date of Demand Notice and security offered towards repayment of loan amount are as under:-

Name of the Borrower(s), /Guarantor (s)	Demand Notice Date & Amount	Description of secured asset (immovable property)
Mr. Devaraju G T, Mrs.Jayamma R (Prospect No. 856589)	26-May-2021 Rs. 2,75,320.00/- (Rupees Two Lakh Seventy Five Thousand Three Hundred Twenty Only)	All that piece and parcel of the property being : Property Bearing Khatha No.223, admeasuring 5610 Sft, Situated at Govindanapalya Village, Hurdigere Hobli, Tumkur Taluk And Dist, Karnataka

If the said Borrowers fail to make payment to IIFL HFL as aforesaid, IIFL HFL may proceed against the above secured assets under Section 13(4) of the said Act, and the applicable Rules, entirely at the risks, costs and consequences of the Borrowers. For, further details please contact to Authorised Officer at Branch Office : IIFL HFL I"ADAM CHAMBERS," #11, Richmond Road, Bengaluru - 560025/or Corporate Office : IIFL Tower, Plot No. 98, Udyog Vihar, Ph-IV Gurgaon, Haryana.
Place: Bangalore Date: 31.05.2021 Sd/- Authorised Officer, For IIFL Home Finance Ltd

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given that, my clients intends to Purchase the schedule property from its owners **M/s Anjanadri Apparels** rep. by its partners **1) Sri A. Chandrashekar** S/o Eranna, age 45 years, **2) Mrs. Nagaveni L**, W/o Late Raju G., aged about 37 years, both are residing at No. 14 and 15, 2nd Main, II Cross, Hoysalanagar, Bangalore-560 091.

Any persons claiming right, title or interest in the said property or any part thereof by way of sale, gift, lease, inheritance, exchange, charge, lien, trust, possession, easement, attachment or otherwise how-so-ever are hereby required to make the same known to the undersigned at his office within 15 days from the date hereof, failing which, the said transactions will be completed, without any reference to such claim and the same, if any shall be considered as waived.

SCHEDULE OF THE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of the **Property bearing Site No.57,** Assessment No.11/1, Khaneshumari No.1112/1129, old CMC Katha No.790, **BBMP Katha No.790/11/3/57,** Situated at Gajanana Nagara, Hegganahalli Village, now comes under the limits of BBMP, Ward No.71, Yeshwanthpura Hobli, Bangalore North Taluk, Bangalore, measuring East to West 86+88/2 Feet and North to South 60 Feet, totally measuring 5220 sqft, along with a RCC Roofed Constructed Factory Building consisting of ground, First floor and Second floor, Ground floor Measuring 4300 sqft First floor measuring 3800 sqft, Second floor measuring 1600 sqft ACC sheet roofed, with Red-axid flooring, Hallow bricks and cement wall, steel door frames and steel Grilled windows, Electricity and Water and all factory shed facilities and Bounded on:

East by : Road,
West by : Private Property,
North by : Property No. 56,
South by : Property No. 58.

RENUKA PRASAD .M.S, Advocate
No. 666, Prasanna Nilaya, 3rd Main, 7th Cross, Ranganathapura, Kamakshipalya, Bengaluru-560 079.
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SOUTHERN CIRCLE, RURAL WORKS, SUNABEDA

0-257

E-Procurement Notice for road & Bridge Works.

NO: Date:

1 Name of the work : Road & Bridge Works - (4 Nos)
3 Class of contractor : "B", "& A" Class of (Odisha PWD) or relevant class of other licensing authority.
4 Estimated Cost : **Varies from Rs.100.12 Lakhs to Rs.142.71 Lakhs (Approximately)**
5 Details projects as per Annexure attached. :

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender online for bidding		Last Date & Time of seeking tender clarification	Date & Time of opening of tender	
		From	To		Technical Bid	Financial Bid
1	2	3	4	5	6	8
Superintending Engineer, Rural Works, Southern Circle, Sunabeda	SERWSCSBD-Online - 06/2021-22	01.06.2021 at 11 .00 A.M.	19.06.2021 up to 5.30 P.M.	18.06.2021 up to 2.00 P.M.	21.06.2021 at 11.00 A.M.	To be intimated separately

6. Further details can be seen from the web site **www.tendersodisha.gov.in**
7. Any Corrigendum/Addendum will be displayed in the above e-tender web sites.

Sd/- Superintending Engineer, Southern Circle RW: Sunabeda. OIPR- 25045/11/0006/2122

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ANDHRA PRADESH LIVE STOCK DEVELOPMENT AGENCY, GUNTUR
e-procurement Tender Notification

No:31/T3/2021, Dated: 28.05.2021

Andhra Pradesh Live Stock Development Agency, Guntur is inviting e-tenders from the interested and eligible bidders for **"supply of High Genetic Merit (HGM) > 4500 Kg Lactation Yield Murrah Frozen Semen Doses"** to their semen stations in the state. For Details the interested and eligible bidders can visit **www.tender.apeprocurement.gov.in** and participate in the tender. For further details please contact Mob.No: **99491 23937** during office working hours.
Email ID: **apldahyd@gmail.com; t3sectionapIda@gmail.com**

Sd/- Chief Executive Officer

DIPR No.117PP/CL/ADVT/1/1/2021-22, Dt: 28/05/2021

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punjab national bank
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POSSESSION NOTICE (For immovable property)

WHEREAS, The undersigned being the Authorised Officer of the Punjab National Bank, SASTRA, Bengaluru – West, under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under Section 13 read with rule 3 of the security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, issued Demand Notice calling upon the Borrowers/ Guarantors/mortgagors mentioned below to repay the dues within 60 days from the date of notice/date of receipt of the said notice.

The borrower's/mortgagor's having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower/s and the public in general that the undersigned has taken the possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under Sub-Section (4) of Section 13 of the said act read with rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 as stated herein below on this date of **26th May 2021.**

The borrower's attention is invited to the provisions of Sub-Section (8) of the section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available to redeem the secured assets.

The borrower/s in particular and public in general is hereby **cautioned not to deal** with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the **Punjab National Bank**, for an amount mentioned below with further interest and expenses thereon..

S. No.	Name of the Borrower	Date of Demand / Possession & Amount Due	Description of Properties
1.	**Borrower :** M/s Ambrosia Crop Enrich (India) Pvt. Ltd. **Mortgagor :** M/s Lakshmi Malleables Pvt Ltd, Represented by Mr. M R Rajath	18.8.2020 / 26.5.2021 as on 31.5.2020 Rs.1,78,56,098.10 and further interest and other expenses thereon	BDA Site No. 170, BBMP PID No. 39-226-170, measuring East to West - 18 meters & North to South -12 meters , totally measuring 216 sq meters (2324.16 sq feet) Situated at 1st stage, 3rd Block, Nagarbhavi, Extension, BBMP Ward No.39, Chandra layout, Bangalore and Bounded on **East By :** Road, **West By :** Site No. 190 & 191, **North By :** Site No. 171 and **South By :** Site No.169 **Name and Address of the Mortgagor/s : M/s Sri Lakshmi Malleabales Pvt Ltd.** No. 144, Survey No.52, Azez Set Industrial Town, Nayandahalli, Mysore Road, Bangalore - 560039.
2.	**Borrower :** M/s Fleuri Serene Pvt Ltd **Mortgagor :** M/s Lakshmi Malleables Pvt Ltd, Represented by Mr. M R Rajath	18.8.2020 / 26.5.2021 as on 31.3.2020 Rs.1,88,99,165.50 and further interest and other expenses thereon	BDA No.29, New Municipal No. 127/29, BBMP PID No. 40-178-127/29, coming within the limits of BBMP Ward No. 40/Attiguppe, measuring East to West - (13.43+18.22)/2 meters & North to South - (9.66+9.61)/2 meters, totally measuring 139.128 sq meters Situated at Nagarbhavi 1st Stage layout, 4th Block, 3rd Cross, Marutinagar, Bangalore and Bounded on **East By :** Other's Private Property, **West By :** Road, **North By :** Rest portion of Survey No 127 and **South By :** Property No. 30. **Name and Address of the Mortgagor/s : M/s Sri Lakshmi Malleabales Pvt Ltd.** No. 144, Survey No.52, Azez Set Industrial Town, Nayandahalli, Mysore Road, Bangalore - 560039.

For Punjab National Bank (SECURED CREDITOR)
(Uma Shankar K R)
Chief Manager
(AUTHORISED OFFICER)

Date : 26.5.2021
Place : Bangalore

TRACKING COVID-19

SPEED AND RISE OF COVID-19 CASES IN KARNATAKA

20,378 CASES REPORTED TODAY

20,628 CASES REPORTED YESTERDAY

TALLY STANDS AT

TODAY	25,87,827
YESTERDAY	25,67,449

DEATHS

TODAY	YESTERDAY
382	492

DISCHARGES

TODAY	YESTERDAY
28,053	42,444

ACTIVE CASES

TODAY	YESTERDAY
3,42,010	3,50,066

POSITIVITY RATE

TODAY	8.73%
YESTERDAY	8.71%

The day positivity rate — 14.68% today — is calculated as the number of patients testing positive out of 100 tests conducted only in a day.

MORTALITY RATE

TODAY	1.10%
YESTERDAY	1.10%

RECOVERY RATE

TODAY	85.67%
YESTERDAY	85.26%

The first Covid-19 case in Karnataka was reported on March 8, 2020. Since then until May 30, 2021, a total of 25,87,827 cases have been reported in 1 year and 80 days...

1,33,96,169 Total doses administered in state

VACCINATION DRIVE STATUS

Number of people completing vaccination	27,26,385
Health care workers 1st dose	7,17,640
Health care workers 2nd dose	4,70,979
Frontline workers 1st dose	6,06,954
Frontline workers 2nd dose	2,10,327
Age 18-45 1st dose	9,30,855
Above 45 1st dose	84,14,335
Above 45 2nd dose	20,45,079

DISTRICT-WISE COVID CASES

LAST 24 HOURS

4,734 BENGALURU URBAN

392 BENGALURU RURAL

Bagalakot: 193	Chamarajanagara: 402	Dakshina Kannada: 727	Hassan: 2,227	Kolar: 341	Raichur: 278	Udupi: 651
Ballari: 598	Chikkballapur: 356	Davanagere: 522	Haveri: 206	Koppal: 365	Ramanagara: 164	Uttara Kannada: 504
Belagavi: 1,171	Chikkamagaluru: 671	Dharwad: 525	Kalaburagi: 107	Mandya: 643	Shivamogga: 386	Vijayapura: 198
Bidar: 37	Chitradurga: 805	Gadag: 289	Kodagu: 271	Mysuru: 1,559	Tumakuru: 773	Yadgir: 107

Black fungus cases soar, 1,250 infected in state

This comes a week after Health Minister Sudhakar put the figure a little over 400

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

CASES of mucormycosis, commonly called black fungus, are increasing in the state, with a total of 1,250 patients getting infected since the beginning of the second wave of Covid-19. This comes just a week after Health Minister Dr K Sudhakar said there were just over 400 cases of mucormycosis in the state.

Of the 1,250 affected patients, 1,193 are still under treatment. While 18 patients have been discharged so far, 39 people have succumbed to the fungus, stated a bulletin released by the health department on Sunday.

A majority of cases are from Bengaluru Urban (521). While 508 people are still under treatment in the state capital, 10 people have recovered and 3 patients have died.

Dharwad district comes second with 119 cases, with 11 still under treatment. Eight people have died in the district. In Kalaburgi district, 102 people were infected with black fungus. While 94 are still in hospital, four have died.

Some district like Ballari, Chikkamagaluru, Hassan, Haveri, Mandya, Ramanagara, Uttara Kannada, Yadgir and Chikkballapur have reported less than 10 cases.

Meanwhile, health officials said that a detailed medical audit will be conducted and after the report is submitted, further information on the cause of each death will be known.

'8,000-10,000 vials of Amphotericin-B received'

Dr Sudhakar said that Union Minister D V Sadananda Gowda held talks with more than eight companies to procure Amphotericin-B, the drug needed to treat black fungus patients. "The state has received 8,000-10,000 vials of Amphotericin-B so far and they will be used to treat those admitted in government and private hospitals," he added.

MUCORMYCOSIS CASES IN K'TAKA AS ON MAY 30

DISTRICT	TOTAL CASES	UNDER TREATMENT	CURED	DEATHS
B'luru Rural	21	19	0	2
B'luru Urban	521	508	10	3
Chikkballapur	1	0	0	1
Hassan	9	6	0	3
Kolar	42	40	0	2
Mandya	3	3	0	0
Mysuru	35	35	0	0
Ramanagara	3	3	0	0
Tumakuru	10	9	1	0
Bagalkot	68	67	0	1
Ballari	6	6	0	0
Belagavi	35	34	0	1
Bidar	18	16	1	1
Dharwad	119	111	0	8
Gadag	10	10	0	0
Haveri	8	8	0	0
Kalaburagi	102	94	4	4
Raichur	36	35	0	1
Vijayapura	57	57	0	0
Yadgir	3	2	0	1
Koppal	13	9	2	2
Chikkamagaluru	1	1	0	0
Chitradurga	33	33	0	0
Shivamogga	38	33	0	5
Davanagere	21	21	0	0
Udupi	10	10	0	0
Uttara Kannada	3	3	0	0
D. Kannada	24	20	0	4
TOTAL	1,250	1,193	18	39

Mortality rates high in 23 districts in Karnataka

IFFATH FATHIMA & RANJANI MADHAVAN @Bengaluru

Autorickshaw drivers gets vaccinated in Bengaluru on Sunday | ASHISHKRISHNA HP

AT least 23 of the 31 districts in Karnataka, including Bengaluru Urban and Rural, have a moving growth rate in mortality higher than 10 per cent. This is an indicator of fatalities doubling in a shorter period of time and an increase in the daily average number of deaths, besides inadequacies in testing procedures, containment measures and critical intervention to save lives.

The study, done by Jeevan Raksha under the technical guidance of Public Health Foundation of India, was conducted over two different periods — a one-week period between May 19 and 26 and another four-week period between April 28 and May 26.

In the May 19-26 period, the moving growth rate (MGR) of Covid deaths was over more than 10 per cent in 23 districts. In the four-week period, the mortality growth trend of the state increased by 79 per cent from 15,033 to 26,926.

"What is more concerning is that, the one-week MGR for rest of Karnataka (excluding Bengaluru Urban) increased from 6 to 11 per cent. One of the primary reasons is limited access to RT-PCR tests in rural areas. This means the death toll is likely to increase in semi-urban and rural areas. If necessary actions are not taken immediately, Karnataka's toll is likely to cross 42,000 by the June-end," Sanjeev Mysore, Convener of Jeevan Raksha, said.

In the four-week period, MGR increased by 98 per cent in Bengaluru Urban from 6,139 fatalities to 12,148. In rest of Karnataka, it increased by 66 per cent from 8,894 fatalities to 14,778. The average daily deaths in the week ending May 26 has increased when compared with the week ending May 19. In Bengaluru, it increased from182 to 273, while in the rest of Karnataka it went up from 238 to 245.

According to the analysis, inadequate and slow testing has resulted in higher deaths. In Tamil Nadu, adequate, quality and timely tests were carried out. Though Bengaluru Urban conducts 45,000+ tests every day, Chennai is doing only 30,000+ tests. This is because Tamil Nadu is the only state that carried out 100 per cent RT-PCR tests from the beginning. But Karnataka continues to flip-flop between unreliable Rapid Antigen Tests and RT-PCR tests, the analysis says.

"This validates that Karnataka is yet to realise tangible benefits in terms of saving lives. The lockdown is yet to deliver the desired results," said Sanjeev.

The study indicates that one in every five people who has died due to Covid in Bengaluru Urban succumbed on the day of hospitalisation. There are many factors, including the fear of exorbitant hospitalisation charges pushing people to delay treatment. Also, Bengaluru failed to put in a robust system for hospitalisation.

The 23 districts that have over 10 per cent MGR are Bengaluru Urban and Rural, Uttara Kannada, Belagavi, Kolar, Chitradurga, Chamarajanaar, Shivamogga, Chikkaballapura, Chikkamagaluru, Yadgir, Gadag, Tumakuru, Mandya, Haveri, Ballari, Udupi, Hassan, Raichur, Koppal, Ramanagara, Kodagu and Kalaburagi.

There is a general perception that Covid has slowed down in Karnataka. When MGR is used, it gives the true picture. In April, the number of cases in Karnataka increased from 1 million to 1.44 million, the MGR was 44 per cent. In May, it increased from 1.44 million to 2.5 million with MGR at 74 per cent. With increase in MGR, doubling period reduces because the daily average number of cases increases.

The average daily cases in April were 15,714 (4,40,000/28), whereas in May, it increased to 37,857.

Few takers for temporary posts of docs in DK govt hosps

VINCENT D'SOUZA @ Mangaluru

EVEN as Dakshina Kannada is struggling to flatten the Covid-19 curve, poor response to the temporary recruitment drive for doctors, nurses and Group D staffers to work at the District Wenlock Hospital and taluk hospitals is adding to the woes of authorities.

The health department and Wenlock Hospital had separately invited applications to fill the posts of five physicians and five anaesthetists, eight MBBS doctors, 69 staff nurses, 46 Group D employees and five lab technicians. While nobody applied for the posts of physicians and anaesthetists (monthly salary of Rs 1.21 lakh), only three applied for the posts of MBBS doctors (Rs 50,000), 25 for the posts of nurses (Rs 25,000) and five each for lab technicians (Rs 15,000) and Group D staffers (Rs 12,000).

This happened despite inviting applications for these posts twice. Though the response for temporary posts is always poor with doctors, this time, the fear of Covid is said to have made applicants more cautious.

Dr Sadashiva Shanbhag, medical superintendent, Wenlock Hospital, said the selected candidates can work for six months. The duration may be extended if the Covid situation continues. Now, the hospital has said that those interested candidates can walk in any time for an interview. Sources in the health department admitted that the poor response is a matter of concern. "There is a huge vacancy of permanent doctors. Now, the footfall has gone up and you can imagine what the situation is."

There are a lot of complaints about doctors and nurses not regularly visiting Covid patients and toilets not being cleaned in government hospitals which is attributed to the acute staff shortage.

Beware! Devices many, but home treatment can go terribly wrong

IFFATH FATHIMA @ Bengaluru

WITH the availability of oxygen cylinders and home isolation as an option for treatment of Covid patients, there have been cases of people delaying going to hospital, resulting in many losing their lives.

Volunteers who have been helping patients get beds or oxygen cylinders, have come across cases where even if a patient's condition is deteriorating, the family opts for home isolation and procures cylinders and other equipment to start treatment at home.

In one case, a 30-year-old covid patient, a resident of Rachenahalli, had cough, breathlessness and dropping oxygen levels. Initially, she was taken to a private clinic and given oxygen, and her oxygen saturation level touched 88. The family brought her home, with the idea of starting home isolation, with the support of oxygen cylinders.

The family arranged for 5-6 oxygen cylinders, devices like BiPAP machine (Bilevel Positive Airway Pressure), nebuliser and non-rebreather mask, and the patient went from bad to worse within five days of home isolation. When volunteers tried to arrange for a ventilator bed, the patient's family was choosy about the hospital.

Mohammed Ismail, volunteer with Mercy Mission, said, "Initially, the patient just required a HDU (high dependency) bed, but the patient's family brought in every gadget and started treatment at home, which led to her condition worsening, and she needed an ICU bed. In spite of attempts to arrange beds, they were picky and said they would go for admission the next day. No hospital is going to hold beds in these times of crisis. This is not the first case, we have come across many such incidents. Lives should not be put at risk."

However, late at night, another volunteer managed to convince the family and the patient was sent to a private hospital.

In another case, a 63-year-old man from Nagawara, who was Covid-positive with oxygen saturation level dropping to 60, was getting treated at home. "The family doctor advised them to stay home and get treated. They went looking for oxygen cylinders, which took two hours, and the doctor took two hours to come and start treatment. The patient lost four hours, his condition worsened and he passed away," said another volunteer.

Meanwhile, a senior doctor from a private hospital said, "In spite of telling people to get admitted early or start the right treatment at home, they don't heed us. If the oxygen level starts dropping, they need to get to hospital fast. Now, with BBMP starting triage centres, things might get better."

INNOVATION

NOW, A 5-IN-1 WEARABLE GADGET TO CHECK VITALS

CHETANA BELAGERE @ Bengaluru

A five-in-one wearable multiparameter, telemetric device is being used to monitor the vital parameters of Covid-19 and non-Covid-19 patients at the city's Jayadeva Institute of Cardiovascular Science and Research.The device — Padma Vitals — has been developed indigenously by Cardiac Design Labs.

According to Anand Madangopal, Founder and CEO of Cardiac Design Labs, he and his team under the guidance of Dr S Jayaprakash, Electrophysiologist, have devised this remote monitoring system, which gives all the vitals such as ECG, heart rate, respiration rate, SpO2, body temperature and BP without the cuff.

The interesting element of this device is that any number of patients can be monitored remotely by the doctor from anywhere in the world. "The software in the smart phone acts as a mirror image of the central monitor," he said. "It is a versatile design to be used in hospitals or at home to monitor patients. It is installed in various government and private hospitals across the country," he said.

Meanwhile, Dr CN Manjunath, director, Jayadeva Institute of Cardiovascular Science and Research, said the device is being used in both Covid and non-Covid wards. "We have installed this device to monitor patients' vital parameters on doctors' mobile phones whether they are in hospital or home which helps in decision making and treatment protocols too," he said

The study was done at Jayadeva to show its accuracy compared to current ICU monitors.

ZERO CASES

Strictures tightly clamped, Gadag, V'pura villages lead the way

RAGHOTTAM KOPPAR & MAHESH M GOUDAR @Gadag, Vijayapura

AT a time when Covid-19 is spreading at a rapid pace in the hinterlands of Karnataka, there are still a number of villages which have staved off the pandemic with success. According to a recent survey, as many as 59 villages in Gadag and 74 villages in Vijayapaura have zero Covid-19 cases.

In Gadag, apart from the 59 villages with no cases, more than 50 villages have single-digit cases. In April, several villages had 20-30 cases and now have a mere 3-4 people infected with coronavirus. The district succeeded in controlling the outbreak due to the efforts of the gram panchayat, zilla panchayat and health department officials, who took it up as a challenge and imposed strict lockdown in rural areas. According to district officials, similar strategies will be implemented in other villages to make them Covid-free.

"Patients with cough and cold and in home isolation were given the right treatment at the right time. People were discouraged from gathering in common spaces. Residents also supported the efforts of their respective panchayats. This helped us reduce the caseload. A strict lockdown has been imposed and the GP staff are keeping vigil in all wards," an official said. Panchayat development officers have also been monitoring migrants who came to the district before the lockdown."There are 59 villages with zero cases. The numbers will fluctuate... but we want to increase the number of zero Covid-19 villages. We have directed Gram Panchayats to check residents for Covid-19 symptoms a nd treat them immediately, in cooperation with health and ASHA workers," said Gadag ZP CEO Bharat S.

A health worker collects swab samples of a resident at a village in Vijayapura

Meanwhile, in Vijayapura, 74 villages have not seen a single Covid-19 case in the second Covid-19 wave.

ZP CEO Govinda Reddy told The New Indian Express, "A door-to-door-survey helped us identify nearly 1,000 Covid-19 cases in rural areas. We put symptomatic patients on early medication. Among the infected, over 85 per cent are in home isolation. In order to prevent them from stepping out of their homes, we are delivering grocery kits at their doorsteps."

"We will continue with the door-to-door survey in all villages, including Covid-free villages, to identify new symptomatic persons. If anyone is found to be symptomatic, they will be tested and given proper treatment. We believe this is the only way to break the chain and bring down cases in rural areas," said Reddy.

The East Godavari district administration in Andhra Pradesh has denotified 31 hospitals, including private and Aarogyasri network hospitals, within one month after notifying them for flouting the guidelines issued by the state government in treating Covid-19 cases

CPM MPs' fact-finding team denied permission to visit Lakshadweep

They wanted to delay our visit, didn't want the world to know of ground reality, says MP

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Kochi

AS the controversy over the sweeping new rules in Lakshadweep rages, the administration has denied permission to a delegation of CPM MPs to undertake a fact-check visit to the island and "study the impact of developmental activities and other reforms".

"Today, the ADM (Additional District Magistrate) informed us to 'plan the proposed visit on a later date considering the Covid situation'," said Elamaram Kareem, leader of CPM MPs in the Rajya Sabha.

A three-member delegation of MPs from Kerala led by Kareem, V Sivadasan (Rajya Sabha) and A M Ariff had written to Praful Khoda Patel, administrator, Union Territory of Lakshadweep, on Saturday seeking permission to visit the islands for two days between May 31 and June 7 "as per the convenience of the administration and following all government guidelines". "Being elected Members of Parliament, it is our right to visit any place in the country and we expect the authorities concerned of the UT of Lakshadweep will facilitate our visit," Kareem's letter had said.

Lakshadweep Administrator Praful Khoda Patel had proposed a slew of new rules, including a ban on meat in mid-day meals for students

But, the denial of permission, he said, was to avoid the world knowing the reality. "They wanted to delay our visit and avoid the world coming to know of the ground reality," Kareem said.

Meanwhile, LDF will move a resolution in the assembly against the new regulations on the Lakshadweep islands. Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan will move the resolution expressing solidarity with the people of Lakshadweep during the zero hour of the assembly. The Opposition has already extended its support for the special resolution to be brought under Rule 118. There will be no question hour on Monday.

Earlier, the request to move a unanimous resolution was considered by the assembly's Business Advisory Committee. The state assembly had earlier moved a resolution against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, while another one was moved against the contentious farm laws. Lawmakers cutting across party lines have extended their support to the cause of the islanders.

Reacting to the issue, Union Minister of State for External Affairs V Muraleedharan said excessive interest of the CPM and Congress over the developments in Lakshadweep is political. The collector has clarified about the development work being carried out in Lakshadweep, he said..

Administrator Patel proposed a slew of new rules including a ban on meat in mid-day meals for students and disqualification of panchayat poll aspirants with more than two children, leading to a turmoil in the Union Territory and in Kerala, the mainland closest to the islands. Both the ruling LDF and Opposition UDF have come out against the new regulations, which also included the introduction of an Anti-Goonda Act in the island territory where the crime rate is very low and the establishment of a development authority with powers to acquire land for development purposes.

80:20 SCHOLARSHIPS

MUSLIM FORUMS WARY OF MORE POLARISATION

M P PRASHANTH @Kozhikode

LEADERS of the Muslim community have cautioned against the possibility of vested interests misdirecting the discussions on the controversial 80:20 ratio for educational scholarships for the minorities that has been struck down by the Kerala High Court. Even while asserting that Muslims should get what is due to them as per the Sachar Commission report, they want to ensure the deliberations do not further vitiate the communal situation in Kerala.

"Attempts to draw communal leverage from the controversy have been visible in Kerala for the past one year. It was intense during the elections to the local bodies and assembly," said A I Abdul Majeed Swalahi, secretary of the Kerala Nadvathul Mujahideen (KNM).

"There was a competition between the BJP and CPM in the move to get maximum mileage from the controversy. But it was the CPM that won the race," he said, adding that such attempts would continue in the future too.

Samvarana Samrakshana Samithi general convener Abdusamad Pookkottur said there are enough indications to suspect the role of the Sangh Parivar in keeping the controversy alive. Addressing a news conference on Saturday, he said some WhatsApp messages are doing the rounds as part of the concerted move to widen the schism between the Muslim and Christian communities.

Sunni leader Kanthapuram A P Aboobacker Musaliar also expressed concern over the debates on the court order with the two communities taking opposite positions.

In a statement, Kanthapuram said extreme caution should be maintained to prevent the "communalists" from taking advantage of the situation.'

"Efforts are needed to counter the move to present it as a Muslim-Christian issue and to create misunderstanding among our fraternal community," he said.

At the same time, Muslim organisations want to convey to the society that the discussions on the topic often do not present the correct picture of the issue.

Gang sexually abused woman as she refused to repay ₹5L: Cops

ENS @Bengaluru

THE Ramamurthy Nagar police, who are interrogating the suspects accused of sexually abusing and torturing a 24-year-old woman in the city recently, have unearthed that the victim had to repay a sum of Rs 5 lakh which she owed them, but was avoiding them whenever they sought repayment.

A senior police officer confirmed that the accused are being interrogated. "We have learnt that the victim, who is alleged to be part of a prostitution racket, had taken advance payment of Rs 5 lakh from the accused. But whenever they confronted her for the repayment over the last few days, she was avoiding them. At one point, when they demanded that the cash be returned, she refused to do so and escaped. It was then that two female suspects, Nasarat and Kajal, managed to track her down and hand her over to the others who then sexually abused her, while one of them video-recorded the assault, which went viral after a week," he said.

Meanwhile, the police will produce the victim before the magistrate on Monday to record her statement under Section 164 of CrPC, while all the accused will be sent to judicial custody, another officer added. The investigation team has already video-recorded the victim's statement on Saturday.

Four days ago, a gang of seven Bangaladeshis, including two women, were arrested by the city police after video footage of the act emerged on social media in Assam, with that state's police tweeting an alert across the North-East. A day later, however, two of the accused were shot at by Bengaluru police, after they allegedly tried to attack them in a bid of escape.

Sasi promises 'revival' of AIADMK

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Chennai

AFTER announcing on March 3 that she would 'stay away from politics', VK Sasikala, onetime aide of the late chief minister J Jayalalithaa, has hinted that she may join active politics. In an audio conversation with two of her loyalists, that went viral on Sunday, Sasikala said that there will be a "good decision" soon. AMMK sources have confirmed to Express, the authenticity of the two audio clips.

Without making any reference to the alleged differences between AIADMK leaders Edappadi K Palaniswami and O Panneerselvam, Sasikala said that she could not sit idly and witness the party going to ruins due to "infighting". In the first audio clip, she says, "we will for sure streamline the party... certainly, I will come."

In the next clip, Sasikala can be heard saying that the AIADMK was built with the hard work of leaders, including her, and it was anguishing to see "them fighting". She then goes on to add that she would soon meet with supporters after the Covid crisis is mitigated.

WATER, WATER, EVERYWHERE

People use boats to cross a flooded road at Ramankary in Kuttanad, Kerala. Even before the onset of Southwest Monsoon, many low-lying places in Kuttanad and upper Kuttanad are witnessing a flood-like situation | ARUN ANGELA

CRIME PATROL

Actor Sanjjanaa gets bail in assault case

Bengaluru: Actor Sanjjanaa Galrani has been granted anticipatory bail by a city court in a case wherein she was accused of assaulting and splashing whiskey on the face of a female film producer. The Cubbon Park police had registered an FIR against Sanjjanaa after a court had directed the police to investigate the case based on a private complaint filed by Vandana Jain. The latter had alleged that the incident had taken place at a club on Lavelle Road on December 24, 2019. Sanjjanaa had moved a petition seeking anticipatory bail. After hearing arguments of both sides, the 45th Additional City Civil & Sessions Court granted her bail on Friday. The court noted that the prosecution had not submitted the medical certificate of the complainant. Though the prosecution claims that the complainant had filed a complaint before the Police Commissioner, the same has not been produced. The bail conditions included a personal bond of Rs 1 lakh and two sureties for a like sum.

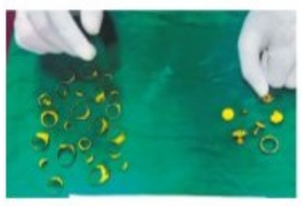
This gold thief hides a part of loot in his stomach

VINCENT D'SOUZA @ Mangaluru

A man who was caught in connection with a jewellery shop theft in Kasaba village of Sullia taluk in Dakshina Kannada, was found hiding a part of the booty in his stomach. Three packets consisting of a total of 30 gold finger rings and earrings were retrieved from the stomach of Shibu, a 48-year-old habitual offender from Thrissur in Kerala, following a bowel preparation by doctors at KVG Hospital in Sullia on Sunday.

Police and doctors were shocked to learn that Shibu had swallowed the gold packets about 15 days ago and used to repeat the swallowing exercise whenever the packets found their way out, albeit with a fresh packing. It was the modus operandi of this habitual offender. He used to keep a part of a stolen booty in his stomach to avoid recovery if caught.

"Usually, police check the pockets and house of culprits, when caught. We don't check their stomach," said MR Harish, PSI, Sullian police station.



The gold jewellery recovered from the stomach of Shibu on Sunday

The duo is said to have involved in several such cases in Kerala in the past and also served a jail sentence in Kannur.

After recovering 147 grams of gold, they were put behind bars on Saturday afternoon. After dinner, Shibu complained of severe stomach ache and claimed he has a hernia problem. He was rushed to taluk hospital in Sullia and then to KVG Hospital. An X-ray found three packets in his intestine and Shibu had no other go but to confess about his weird habit.

ALL ADOPTED CHILDREN OF RAILWAY EMPLOYEES CAN NOW GET MED CARE

S LALITHA @BENGALURU

A senior officer of Bengaluru Railway Division is instrumental in ensuring that all children adopted by employees of Indian Railways are treated on par with biological children, to avail of medical facilities in hospital. A 21-year-old rule was amended and an order issued by the Railway Board on May 25 to this effect.

Veena Nayak, a single woman who works as office superintendent in the engineering department of Bengaluru Railway Division, had adopted a boy and girl, now aged 14 and 13 respectively. She took up the cause on behalf of one of her kids in June 2020, and it has borne fruit a year later.

K Asif Hafeez, Senior Divisional Personnel Officer, coordination, South Western Railway, told TNIE, "The issue was brought to our notice by Nayak, when she was not able to procure the Unique Medical Identity Card which we are issuing to all family members of present and past employees, so they can avail of treatment at any railway hospital in the country." As per rules, only one adopted child is allowed to access facilities free of cost at Railway hospitals, as well as private hospitals empanelled by it, he said.

TNIE has a copy of the new order, which is an amendment of the Board's order on September 5, 2000. It states, "Stepsons, unmarried step-daughters and legally adopted children subject to age limit prescribed, and provided they are wholly dependent on the railway employee..."

There are 37,000 families across South Western Railway which are covered by hospitals and this move will be a motivation to railway employees hesitant to adopt more children

> The issue was brought to our notice by Veena Nayak, when she was not able to procure the Unique Medical Identity Card which we are issuing to all family members of present and past employees, so they can avail of treatment at any railway hospital
>
> --K Asif Hafeez, Senior Divisional Personnel Officer, coordination, SWR

There are 37,000 families across South Western Railway which are covered by hospitals, and this move will be a motivation to railway employees hesitant to adopt more children. Hafeez said.

Veena Nayak said she is glad she took up the issue. "I was just fighting for the rights of adopted kids. They are no different and should be treated on par with biological kids."

Top Bengaluru officials were very supportive when she highlighted the issue. Hafeez, posted in Bengaluru earlier, along with former Additional Divisional Railway Manager, Administration, Kalyani Sethuraman and Principal Chief Personnel Officer B G Mallya, are said to have written to the Railway Board and pursued the matter.

EXPRESS READ

Chennai faring well, but nearby dists a concern

Chennai: While the Test Positivity Rate (TPR) in Chennai may be on a downward trend, most recently at 8.8 per cent, neighbouring districts may still have some work to be done. Chengalpattu district officials told Express the TPR, as recorded on Friday, was 19.7 per cent, and health officials in Tiruvallur said they were maintaining daily samples at around 9,000, which would bring its TPR to about 12 per cent as on Saturday.

First Covid hosp by LSG body to open today

Kochi: Samudrika Hall at Willingdon Island will become the country's first Covid hospital set up by a local self-government. The 102-oxygen bed hospital will be inaugurated by Cochin Port Trust chairman M Beena at 11.30 am on Monday. About a month ago, the Kochi Corporation had completed the preparations, including partitioning and panelling, to set up the hospital. Samudrika Covid Hospital will function from Monday with one of the best facilities available in Kerala. The hospital will be of great help to people in the western parts of Kochi.

TURNING ADVERSITY INTO OPPORTUNITY

After Covid robbed him of his job, Odisha man now employs 100 people

HEMANT KUMAR ROUT @ Bhubaneswar

IN the pandemic that triggered a massive migrant crisis in the country, the story of Ranjan Sahoo could be one of the most inspiring examples of fortitude and solidarity that has brought light into the lives of many hapless victims battling unemployment and loss of livelihood.

A native of nondescript Gunthi village under Pattamundai block in Kendrapara district, Ranjan was one among the 8.5 lakh migrants, who had returned to Odisha from different states during the lockdown last year. Many changed professions for a living but this 40-year-old school dropout set up a garment factory in an area that never expected an industry to come up and provided employment to nearly a hundred people, including 70 women, who too were rendered jobless.

The Royal Green Garments built on the hopes and aspirations of a determined Ranjan now deals with only men's wear catering to the local markets. The unit produces shirts, T-shirts, trousers and boxer shorts which have found huge demand for quality at a reasonable price.

Ranjan lost his job when the garment factory in Kolkata, where he was employed since 2013, closed down during the lockdown last year. He, however, did not give up.

He decided to set up his own unit in his village. With him were a group of women with previous experience in garment manufacturing. They had returned from Surat, Kerala and Karnataka after losing their jobs there.

"I returned home in April last year after the company was shut. I came home to find thousands of others like me back at their native and staring at uncertain future without jobs or employment. I planned to set up my own venture and start a new innings, while providing work to others," he said.

> I returned home in April after the company was shut. I came home to find thousands of others like me back at their native and staring at uncertain future without jobs or employment. I planned to set up my own venture and start a new inning, while providing work to others
>
> Ranjan Sahoo

EDITORIAL

Words ought to be a little wild, for they are the assault of thoughts on the unthinking

John Maynard Keynes

INDIAN EXPRESS IS NOT AN INDUSTRY. IT IS A MISSION.

— Ramnath Goenka

RESCIND ORDER TO RECALL BENGAL CHIEF SECY IMMEDIATELY

What is it with Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee that she throws a fit one day claiming she was not allowed to talk to power at the Centre, but when an opportunity arises a week later she ignores a scheduled meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi at her own turf? And why is the Centre acting like a crybaby demanding back a toy it had just gifted due to a perceived slight? How cruel is it to recall a chief secretary to Delhi just four days after he was given extension in service because of his expertise in managing the pandemic. Fingers would surely be pointed at the Modi government for the recall if Bengal's Covid count does not go down rapidly in tandem with other states. This tit-for-tat is against the federal spirit and could add to the list of mis-steps by the Centre, as it blundered its way in managing the second wave of the pandemic.

As for Mamata, staying away from the meeting convened by Modi after his aerial assessment of the havoc wrought on Bengal, Odisha and Jharkhand by Cyclone Yaas was no less shocking. Her anger was tied to the presence of loyalist-turned-foe Suvendu Adhikari, who defeated her in Nandigram and is now the leader of opposition in the Assembly. Whether she likes it or not, Suvendu's is a constitutionally elected position. She needs to learn to do business with him. Her argument that Odisha's leader of the opposition was not present at a similar meeting Modi had with her counterpart Naveen Patnaik was specious because he was invited but could not make it. Her no-show not only militates against basic decency and the federal spirit, the state also lost an opportunity to make its pitch for Central support. Claiming a day later that she is ready to fall at the feet of the prime minister if he does justice to Bengal is merely playing to the gallery. In contrast, Naveen showed how to gracefully treat his guest, telling Modi he wasn't seeking emergency aid since the Centre's finances were already strained.

This clash of elephantine egos will do no good. The Centre ought to rescind its order to recall the Bengal chief secretary forthwith.

JOIN HANDS TO COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE

At a time when the nation is grappling with the pandemic, a cyclone that struck India left behind a trail of destruction estimated to cost around billions of dollars. A report by GIS consultancy RMSI pegs the losses caused by Cyclone Tauktae to be around ₹15,000 crore—about $2 billion. Tauktae is the third cyclone to hit India since the onset of the Covid pandemic in 2020, the other two being Amphan and Yaas. Amphan, which hit the country in the first half of 2020, was proclaimed the world's costliest disaster by the Aon catastrophe report. The cumulative impact of these three cyclones on India is estimated to be around $20 billion. That means close to 1% of the country's GDP was wiped out by just three natural disasters. This, experts say, is only set to worsen.

The Indian Meteorological Department has warned that the Arabian Sea is witnessing an increase in intense cyclones, thanks to the rapid warming of the Indian Ocean. Scientists observed that increase in Arabian Sea cyclones was directly proportional to this warming. If this trend continues unchecked, massive destruction is expected in the coming years as about 14% of India's 1.3 billion people live in coastal cities. Scientists are urging immediate combat measures, including climate-proofing of our cities, to mitigate the impact of disasters. To begin with, it's imperative for world nations to come together to build the next mega science project, on the lines of CERN and the Giant Magellan Telescope, for climate modelling.

Earlier this month, the UK's Royal Society elaborated on how climate-proofing would be impossible without developing next-generation climate models. Such a task cannot be achieved by any one nation as it requires staggering levels of super-computing, possible to achieve only by setting up an international centre. Bodies in the UK and Australia have already begun negotiations to this effect as there's no time to lose. Between 2000 and 2019, the Earth witnessed an average of 185 disasters annually. In 2020, that number shot up drastically, with 207 natural disasters being recorded in the first six months alone. It's important for India to also raise its voice for such a centre to save its people and infrastructure.

The time has come for India to adopt cohesive policies to ensure inequalities are not fuelled by the government's policy decisions. An unjust state will eventually result in unrest

INEQUALITIES HAVE INCREASED UNDER THIS GOVT

KAPIL SIBAL

Senior lawyer, Congress leader and member of Rajya Sabha

AMIT BANDRE

A just social and economic order is based on equity. Iniquitous government policies create societal schisms. When large sections of the populace feel discriminated against, disenchantment sets in. On occasions this leads to social unrest.

We are witnessing increasing economic inequality and rising social tensions since Narendra Modi became prime minister. Demonetisation, faulty implementation of GST and heartless handling of the Covid-19 pandemic have inflicted untold misery on ordinary folk and businesses. Statistics, that are evidence of this too, are not going through "Achhe Din".

The rich are thriving as the Sensex touches new heights, far removed from the landscape of the economic reality on the ground and deprivations consuming the poor. While the government is busy with its political agendas, to polarise India, it has paid scant regard to the real agendas that needed to be addressed. Reducing poverty, promoting equity and justice are the real agendas. Presently, the system has not only failed to protect the poor but also breeds discrimination. Let's address the facts.

In 2020 alone, the increase in wealth of the top 11 Indian billionaires was enough to vaccinate the entire needy population of our country. This money could have even funded schemes such as MGNREGA for the next 10 years. The same year saw 75 million more people in India seep into poverty because of Covid-19. A large number of small and medium-size businesses were shut, jobs were lost and incomes fell, resulting in a deep economic recession. The Indian middle class may well have shrunk by a third while the number of poor people earning less than ₹150 per day doubled (Pew Research Centre, 2021). A study by Azim Premji University (2021) estimates that around 230 million Indians have been pushed into poverty in the last one year. The rate of both rural and urban poverty increased by 15 and 20 percentage points, respectively. Around 150 million workers remained out of work by the end of 2020.

Our healthcare infrastructure in rural areas is next to non-existent. The pandemic has also demonstrated that the existing healthcare system is in a shambles. India has a doctor-population ratio far lower than the WHO's standard of 1:1,000. In rural areas, the ratio is 1:25,000. It is tragic that only 13% people in rural India have access to primary healthcare centres, and only 9.6% to a hospital. For 70% of our population, the number of hospital beds is lower than the national average of 0.55 per 1,000 inhabitants. In terms of access and quality of health services, China, Sri Lanka, Bhutan and Bangladesh are ranked far ahead of India.

Income inequalities are also a matter of deep disquiet. Almost 12% of our population is engaged in casual labour. Even amongst regular wage earners comprising 41% of urban households, rampant inequality prevails. In fact, 71% of regular salaried employees have no written job contracts; half of them are ineligible for social security benefits. The pandemic having coincided with a global slowdown, a public health crisis of this magnitude will adversely and negatively impact our economy. More people are likely to lose their jobs, resulting in harsher inequalities. The mindset of this government and its passion for a digital economy has marginalised the poor and the disadvantaged further. This government's vaccination policy, with all above 18 years entitled to be vaccinated, has shown utter insensitivity by relying on web applications to get people vaccinated. I wonder how many people in this country, especially in the context of the extent of disadvantaged and marginalised, have access to such apps. Without registration, the opportunity to get vaccinated will not be available.

> Demonetisation, faulty implementation of GST and heartless handling of the Covid-19 pandemic have inflicted untold misery on ordinary folk and businesses. The system has not only failed to protect the poor but also breeds discrimination

In urban areas, internet is generally available and people have access to smartphones. However, the situation is quite different in Indian villages. Digitally divided India has further curtailed the opportunities for the poor to be vaccinated. A prior registration process, apart from being user unfriendly, does not work in a country where 50% of the population has no access to the internet. The Union government's insensitivity to make the Cowin portal and Arogya Setu and Umang apps the only means to register is tantamount to mocking the poor. Even a moderate internet connection does not allow for registration; one requires fast internet speed to track and book the available vaccination slots. Even so, it is taking days to complete the process owing to huge traffic on these web applications. Ironically, the government considers registration through these web applications more convenient for citizens. A government that lacks understanding of what access and convenience mean only caters to both confusion and rampant inequality The poor are excluded and even those who have smartphones are finding it difficult to register for vaccination.

The digital divide in education is also a matter of great concern. Just over a third of our government schools have access to functional computers (2016-17). In fact, the overall percentage of schools with functional computers (2016-17) has reduced since 2012. Less than a quarter of Indian households have internet facility and only 11% have a functional computer. Among the rural households, only 15% have access to internet. Online education, another passion of this government, has further marginalised 70% of our children. Poorer children are missing from online classes because of the digital divide. This divide is evident across class, gender, region or place of residence. Amongst the poorest 20% of households, only 2.7% have access to computers and 8.9% to internet facilities.

The time has come for India to adopt cohesive well-thought-out policies to ensure that inequalities are not fuelled by the government's policy decisions. An unjust and unequal state will eventually result in disquiet and unrest. India deserves better.

(Tweets @KapilSibal)

A NEW APPROACH TO ENCOURAGE INDUSTRY IN KERALA

T NANDA KUMAR

Former Secretary to GoI and now a member of Punjab CM's Advisory Council

Pinarayi Vijayan, who was recently elected as the chief minister of Kerala for a second term, did the unthinkable: He dropped all his previous Cabinet ministers and brought in fresh faces. The message seems to be a new vision and a new agenda, with a team raring to go.

His immediate priority will be to contain Covid and the related economic downturn with a slew of welfare measures. The remaining part of this year may be devoted mostly to firefighting. At some point, however, he will have to turn his attention to business and industry to get back employment and economic growth. The most tempting response to the problems of this sector would be offering packages with subsidies and concessions. But such an approach might hit the resource crunch wall and get delayed.

The government can kindle entrepreneurial spirits in Kerala if it makes its intentions clear that businesses (and this includes tourism and IT) are welcome in the state. To do this, I suggest an approach of 'survive, revive and thrive': survive the pandemic and the resultant lockdowns and loss of business; revive business as and when opportunities open up; and thrive on a long-term sustainable basis. Such an approach requires a carefully designed strategy based on an in-depth analysis of existing businesses (I exclude the public sector here) and a clear way forward for the next five, if not ten, years.

One important part of such a strategy is to simplify, digitise and decriminalise. It is about the ease of doing business for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs). The Centre publishes a BRAP (Business Reform Action Plan) ranking list. Kerala ranks 28th in the list in 2020. The only major state ranked below Kerala is Odisha, which is catching up fast. One can always argue that these rankings are based on national indices and Kerala's situation is different. There cannot, however, be any question on the need for reforms in the ease of doing business in Kerala.

What does this imply?

1. Simplify: Simplify all processes related to the setting up of and managing day-to-day affairs. Start with simplification of forms, easier filing of returns and reducing the compliance burden

2. Digitise: Make provisions for filing applications/returns digitally. Reply digitally to digital requests. This involves a concerted effort to delegate authority and holding officers accountable. Track applications and their disposal digitally and exercise control where required, but monitor all cases.

3. Decriminalise: Criminalising every omission or commission is against good governance and business confidence. This attitude of 'prosecute, prosecute' comes from a mindset of the yesteryears. Today, compliance with the law can be ensured through different methods. It is another matter that most of these criminal cases do not end up in convictions either.

The Centre has suggested an action plan under BRAP to guide states to improve the ease of doing business. This is a detailed to-do list with 301 action points that encompass key areas like investment enablers and single-window systems for licenses, land administration, change in land use, etc., and includes specific ones for selected industries including film shooting.

> The Kerala Factories Rules says: "The number and location of the spittoons to be provided shall be to the satisfaction of the Inspector." Like Kerala, Punjab too ranked low in the Business Reform Action Plan list. ... The Global Alliance for Mass Entrepreneurship found 1,178 such offenses punishable by imprisonment and that a median MSME with 100 workers has 452 compliances, has to maintain 50 labour registers, etc.

The Punjab experiment:

Punjab was also placed low in the list (19). It used the lockdown time to do some serious thinking on the issue. It had help from outside, particularly from a committee of experts advising the chief minister (part-time, honorary basis) and the Global Alliance for Mass Entrepreneurship (GAME). The committee came out with the three-pronged strategy: "simplify, digitise, decriminalise". A group of experts painstakingly went through a plethora of laws and rules that inhibit the establishment and growth of business and industry. Let me cite just one gem of a rule.

Section 20 of the Factories Act allows for the provision of spittoons: "In every factory, there shall be provided a sufficient number of spittoons in convenient places and they shall be maintained in a clean and hygienic condition." Kerala Factories Rules (Section 50) says: "The number and location of the spittoons to be provided shall be to the satisfaction of the Inspector." Any violation is subject to Section 92 of the Act, which prescribes a maximum punishment of imprisonment of up to two years!

The team from GAME found 1,178 such offenses punishable by imprisonment. They also found that a median MSME with 100 workers has 452 compliances, has to maintain 50 labour registers and is subject to a host of licenses (70 across all sectors), mostly requiring periodic renewal.

The Punjab government decided:

1. To remove imprisonment terms from 308 'low risk' provisions, ending the risk of prosecution and imprisonment for entrepreneurs and reducing pressure on the law and order system;

2. To reduce the number of labour registers an entrepreneur must maintain from 50 to 14, along with a single digital form for the ones who prefer a digital interface;

3. To ensure timely delivery of key licenses and permits, as prescribed under the Punjab Transparency Act, 2018.

This, for them, is just the beginning! Kerala, in turn, can start with the following:

1. State clearly that the new government intends to cut through red tape and remove all discretionary powers in the MSME context.

2. Constitute a small group to catalogue all compliance requirements, list all licenses required by them, list out all registers and forms required to be filled in by them and catalogue all offences with imprisonment terms applicable to MSMEs.

3. Set up an advisory group (honorary, part-time members) to suggest a major reduction in the above.

4. Conduct a process audit of five key departments and reduce process time for sanctions/renewals.

5. Lay down a clear road map to simplify, digitise and decriminalise!

A bold beginning in this direction could give the new government a head start.

(nandu_tn@yahoo.com)

MAILBAG

WRITE TO: letters@newindianexpress.com

Paid a pittance

The plight of those working in Chennai's burial grounds is horrible *(Burning problem*, May 30). For digging five or six pits a day each 10-12 feet deep, that they are hardly paid ₹200 is shocking. While many of us speak for giving more to frontline workers who are already in government service, not many raise their voices for these workers whose job is more hazardous. It is time the government addressed their grievances.

S Retnaswamy, Chennai

China and virus origin

The way China reacts whenever there is any talk about the origin of coronavirus, it is obvious that it has something to hide. The needle of suspicion is clearly pointing towards China. The chief of the WHO is clearly supportive of Beijing. The recent move by US President Joe Biden will help. India did well in supporting a probe into the origin of the virus.

Capt Raju Mathai (Retd), Kochi

Increase spending

The column *RBI message to Raisina Hill. Spend!* (May 30) is timely. The need of the hour is investment, specifically in infrastructure to create employment and consumption. It is equally important to ramp up health infrastructure.

A M Chakravarty, Hyderabad

Cancel Class 12 board exam

Due to Covid, it would be unfair to conduct Class 12 exams. Students in rural areas did not have online facilities and though the syllabus in Karnataka was reduced, there was not enough time to complete it. Many students have written only a mid-term exam that included just part of the syllabus.

Lekha C R, Karnataka

Vairamuthu & harassment

Tamil poet Vairamuthu has declared that he is returning the award conferred on him by the Kerala-based ONV Cultural Academy. He said he considers the ongoing controversy to be a slight to his image. Did he not find any damage caused to his 'image' when allegations of sexual harassment were made against him by 17 women in the past? Has the importance of 'self-respect' dawned on the lyricist only after many celebrities denounced the jury's decision to confer the prestigious award on him?

P G Menon, Chennai

Edu institutes' blackmail

The poor and middle class have been suffering due to the pandemic for over a year. Many have lost their jobs and are struggling to survive. Yet, there are still schools and colleges that are resorting to blackmail saying that results would be withheld otherwise and children would not be allowed to attend online classes. I request the Telangana government to please intervene and stop them from demanding full fees now.

Shakeeb Mujtahedi, Telangana

Development of highways

The new Kerala PWD minister has hinted that highways would be improved.
If any improvement is planned for major highways, the width should be of standard dimensions. Else, in the ultimate analysis, it may prove to be uneconomical. Let us not be penny wise and pound foolish.

K A John, Aluva

THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

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TWEETS OF THE DAY

K.C. Singh @ambkcsingh
BJP flailing at social media, expending irrationally huge amount of energy on quarrelling with Mamata are signs of panic over dipping popularity of Modi

Prashant Kishor @PrashantKishor
Be grateful to #PMCares for PROMISE of free education; a RIGHT guaranteed by the Constitution/RTE

Jairam Ramesh @Jairam_Ramesh
It's now clear the Kumbh Mela was the single-most deadly superspreader. Faith has its place. But ignoring science during pandemic has proved fatal

Members of LGBTIQ community stand in a queue for first dose of Covid-19 vaccine at a vaccination centre in Kolkata on Sunday | PTI

Centre extends benefits under EPFO, ESIC plans

Support includes pension for dependents of insured persons, hike in maximum sum assured

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

THE Ministry of Labour and Employment on Sunday announced additional benefits for the family of workers through the ESIC and EPFO who have died due to Covid pandemic.

These benefits include pension for dependents of insured persons with Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) who died due to Covid-19 and hike in maximum sum assured under the group insurance scheme Employees' Deposit Linked Insurance Scheme (EDLI), run by Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO), to ₹7 lakh from ₹6 lakh.

The decision was taken keeping in view the rising number of deaths due to coronavirus. According to the ministry, the measure will play a key role in addressing the concerns of families of those workers who have died due to the infection and also help them tackle financial troubles.

"To support the families of Insured Persons (IP) under the ESIC scheme, it has been decided that, all dependent family members of IPs who have been registered in the online portal of the ESIC prior to their diagnosis of Covid disease and subsequent death due to the disease, will be entitled to receive the same benefits and in the same scale as received by the dependents of insured persons who die as a result of employment injury, subject to the following eligibility conditions — the insured person must have been registered on the ESIC online portal at least three months prior to the diagnosis of Covid disease resulting in death, he/she must have been employed for wages and contributions for at least 78 days should have been paid or payable in respect of deceased person during one year immediately preceding the diagnosis of Covid disease resulting in death," the ministry said in a statement.

> **The ministry has announced additional benefits for workers through ESIC and EPFO schemes to address the fear and anxiety of workers about wellbeing of their family members**
>
> Labour and Employment Ministry

Currently, for the insured persons under the ESIC, after death or disablement due to employment injury, a pension equivalent to 90 per cent of the average daily wage drawn by the worker is made available to the spouse and widowed mother for the whole life and children till they attain the age of 25 years. For the female child, the benefit is available till her marriage.

Current benefits under ESIC

Currently, for the insured persons (IPs) under the ESIC, after death or disablement of the IP due to employment injury, a pension equivalent to 90 per cent of average daily wage drawn by the worker is available to the spouse and widowed mother for life long and for children till they attain the age of 25 years. For the female child, the benefit is available till her marriage.

Still at 1st wave peak, most curbs to stay: Uddhav

SUDHIR SURYAWANSHI @ Mumbai

THE second wave of the coronavirus pandemic is not over yet, and active cases are still close to the first wave's peak, Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray said Sunday while announcing the current lockdown-like restrictions in the state would be extended by 15 days with some relaxations.

Maharashtra reported 18,600 new cases on Sunday, its lowest one-day count since mid-March this year, even as its active cases stood at 2,71,801.

Lapses during the first wave of the pandemic last year and a hurried decision of reopening everything cost us the lives of the many people during the second wave, Thackeray said. "Every life is important. Therefore, people threatening to protest if the restrictions are not eased out should understand the gravity of the situation. It is true that the lockdown is not the solutions and business should operate but they cannot afford to do this at this moment," Thackeray said.

He added it is one of the toughest and bitter decisions to impose the restrictions over his own people.

Thackeray said in districts that are reporting less than 10 per cent positivity rate, the authorities can extend the operation time, between 7 am and 2 pm, for essential shops and establishments. "After 2 pm, only essential services will be allowed to operate. The district authority will also take the call for reopening non-essential shops or malls," he said.

"If any district positivity rate is more than 20 per cent, then that districts will have to seal its border," he added.

Congress party workers stage a protest against Central government's vaccine policy, in Mumbai on Sunday | PTI

> **Every life is important... It is true that the lockdown is not the solutions and businesses should operate but they cannot afford to do this at this moment** —UDDHAV THACKERAY, Maharashtra CM

Haryana, Odisha and Telangana extend lockdown

Meanwhile, Haryana, Odisha and Telangana were the latest among states and Union Territories to extend the COVID-induced lockdown, while Uttar Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir on Sunday announced a partial easing of restrictions in districts with less active cases, though night curfew and weekend shutdown will remain.

Many states, including Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra and Goa, have extended the lockdown or restrictions for a week to a fortnight in June, while some of them like Delhi, Madhya Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh have also announced a certain relaxation in the curbs due to a decline in new cases and positivity rate.

With agency inputs

BJP chief J P Nadda inspects relief material in New Delhi on Sunday on completion of 7 years of Modi government | PARVEEN NEGI

BJP working for people, Oppn has gone into quarantine, slams Nadda

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

BJP president J P Nadda said Sunday his party workers were standing with the people during the coronavirus pandemic unlike the Opposition, which has gone into "quarantine" and working to lower the morale of the country.

"In this pandemic, BJP workers, without being bothered about their wellbeing, are standing with the people. But the Opposition has gone into lockdown and quarantined itself. It is visible only in virtual press conferences or on Twitter," Nadda said. The BJP chief was addressing party workers virtually on the seventh anniversary of the Narendra Modi government at the Centre. In view of the pandemic, the party has decided not to celebrate the occasion and instead observe a "Seva Diwas" by organising relief work across the country under the 'Sewa hi Sangathan hai' campaign.

On Sunday, Nadda said BJP workers in one lakh villages were serving the needy to mark the occasion. Continue working like "doers" and help people during the pandemic, and not get bothered by the "obstructors" who have absolved themselves from all responsibilities, Nadda told party workers in a veiled attack on the Opposition.

"Some are 'sadhak' (doers), while some are 'badhak' (obstructors). Such people are also in Delhi. But we don't have to get bothered by them and continue in our endeavour to serve people and help them during the pandemic," he said.

Taking on opposition leaders over their statements about the Covid-19 vaccination drive, the BJP chief said, "Those making a noise about Covid-19 vaccine now, are the ones who earlier raised doubts about it."

Terming the PM's leadership strong and visionary, Union Home Minister Amit Shah in a tweet said Modi has made the life of the poor, farmers and deprived sections better over the last seven years by bringing them into the mainstream of development. "India under Modi's leadership will overcome all challenges," Shah said.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, meanwhile, termed the seven years of the Modi government as a new chapter of development and governance in the country's history.

CLIP SHOWS MEN DUMPING PATIENT'S BODY IN UP RIVER

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Lucknow

AFTER disturbing visuals of unidentified bodies floating in the Ganga river, a video went viral in which two men are seen dumping the body of a Covid patient into the Rapti river in Uttar Pradesh's Balrampur district.

The 26-second clip, which appears to be filmed by a person from a vehicle, shows the two men, one of them wearing PPE suit, amid rain throwing the body from a road bridge.

While the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) confirmed the patient had tested positive, the police announced that two persons, including a close relative of the Covid victim and a sanitation staff, was arrested for the act that took place on Saturday. "A criminal case was lodged against them and further investigations are underway," ASP, Balrampur, Arvind Mishra said.

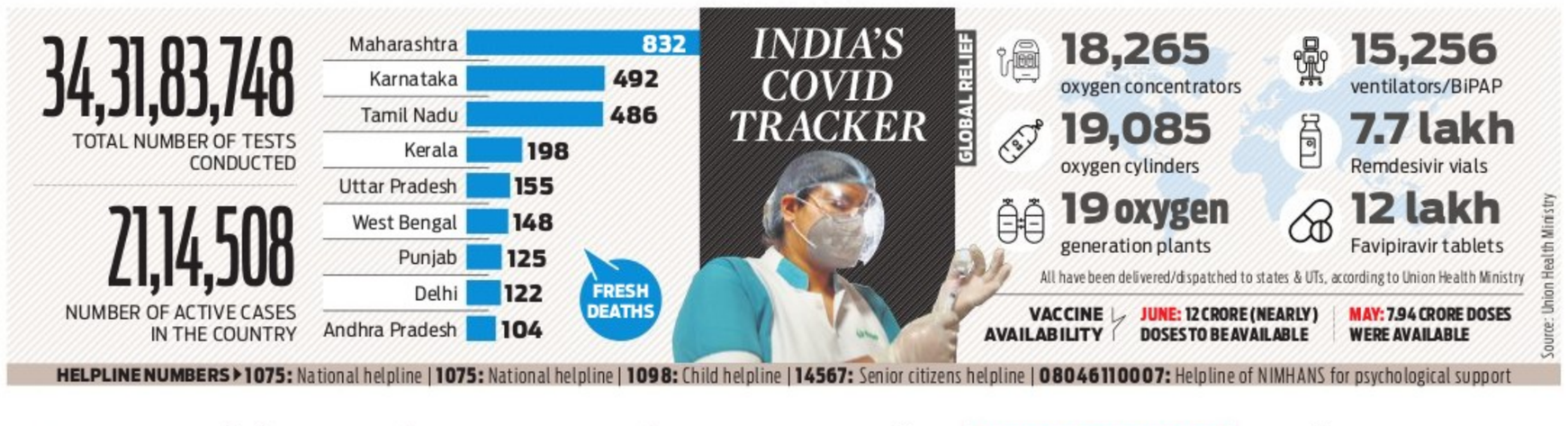
According to Balrampur CMO Dr VB Singh, a 68-year-old man from Shohratgarh area was admitted at a hospital in Balrampur district on May 25, where he tested Covid positive the next day. He was shifted to an isolation ward at the Jila Sanyukt Chikitsalaya but died on May 28 evening.

The body was handed over to the patient's nephew Sanjay Shukla and sent in a vehicle for cremation the next morning. But, the police said, instead of getting the body cremated at the Bijlipur Ghat, Shukla took the body and got it thrown in the river with the help of the sanitation staff and another man who works at the riverside cremation ground. Shukla allegedly oversaw the operation from an SUV, and the police are looking into the possibility of money being exchanged for getting the work done. Also under scanner is the role of those who filmed the clip.

Disturbing visuals from Balrampur

The 26-second clip, which appears to be filmed by a person from a vehicle, shows the two men, one of them wearing PPE suit, throwing the body from a road bridge

The opposition Congress tweeting the video on Sunday and asserted that the awful state of affairs in UP was exposed yet again. "Will the UP government now prove this video as false," it questioned.


34,31,83,748
TOTAL NUMBER OF TESTS CONDUCTED
21,14,508
NUMBER OF ACTIVE CASES IN THE COUNTRY
Maharashtra 832
Karnataka 492
Tamil Nadu 486
Kerala 198
Uttar Pradesh 155
West Bengal 148
Punjab 125
Delhi 122
Andhra Pradesh 104
FRESH DEATHS
INDIA'S COVID TRACKER
GLOBAL RELIEF
18,265 oxygen concentrators
15,256 ventilators/BiPAP
19,085 oxygen cylinders
7.7 lakh Remdesivir vials
19 oxygen generation plants
12 lakh Favipiravir tablets
All have been delivered/dispatched to states & UTs, according to Union Health Ministry
VACCINE AVAILABILITY
JUNE: 12 CRORE (NEARLY) DOSES TO BE AVAILABLE
MAY: 7.94 CRORE DOSES WERE AVAILABLE
Source: Union Health Ministry
HELPLINE NUMBERS ▸ 1075: National helpline | 1075: National helpline | 1098: Child helpline | 14567: Senior citizens helpline | 08046110007: Helpline of NIMHANS for psychological support

Lowest single-day spike in 46 days

New Delhi: India recorded a single-day rise of 1,65,553 new Covid-19 cases, the lowest in 46 days, taking the country's infection tally to 2,78,94,800, according to Union Health Ministry data updated on Sunday. The daily positivity declined to 8.02 per cent, remaining below the 10 per cent-mark for the sixth consecutive day, while the weekly positivity rate dropped to 9.36 per cent, it said. The death toll due to the disease climbed to 3,25,972 in the country with 3,460 fatalities being recorded in a span of 24 hours, the data updated at 8 am showed. The number of active cases has reduced to 21,14,508, comprising 7.58 per cent of the total infections, while the national Covid-19 recovery rate has improved to 91.25 per cent, it said. The count of the daily new cases is the lowest in 46 days. India had recorded 1,61, 736 infections on April 13. The number of people who have recuperated from the disease has surged to 2,54,54,320, while the case fatality rate stands at 1.17 per cent, the data stated.

72-year-old Covid patient administered 'antibody cocktail' at Mohali hospital

CHANDIGARH: A 72-year-old Covid positive man was administered the 'monoclonal antibody cocktail' therapy at Fortis Hospital in Mohali near here on Sunday, days after the treatment was given to two similar patients in Delhi and Gurgaon hospitals.

The Mohali-based Fortis Hospital, in a statement, said the patient, who had tested positive for the infection two days ago, is a diabetic with chronic kidney disease.

"He was administered one dose of the cocktail intravenously," the statement said, adding the patient is stable after the infusion. Dr Zafar Ahmed, a senior consultant with the Critical Care, Pulmonology and Chest and Sleep Medicine Department of the Mohali Fortis Hospital, said like antibodies, which are proteins generated by the body to fight disease, monoclonal antibodies are 'artificially created in the lab'.

"In this cocktail, Casirivimab and Imdevimab are monoclonal antibodies that specifically block the spike protein of SARS-CoV-2, thereby preventing the coronavirus attachment and entry into human cells," said Dr Ahmed. "This is another very important step that has been taken by the medical community to effectively combat the pandemic and help people recover faster," he added.

Drug majors Roche India and Cipla had on Monday announced the launch of Roche's Antibody Cocktail in India, priced at ₹59,750 per dose for the treatment of mild to moderate patients facing high risks.

"The first batch of the Antibody Cocktail is now available in India while a second batch will be made available by mid-June. In total, they can potentially benefit 2,00,000 patients as each of the 1,00,000 packs that will be available in India offers treatment for two patients," Cipla and Roche had said in a joint statement. *ENS*

EXPRESS READ

Manipur floats scheme for orphans

New Delhi: Manipur on Sunday launched a scheme for children who have been orphaned due to the pandemic. CM N Biren Singh said the state will provide ₹3,500 for every bereaved child living with his extended family or under a guardian's care.

4 docs booked for overcharging

Pune: Four doctors from a hospital have been booked for allegedly overcharging the kin of a Covid victim. The patient died in September and bills that his kin got were ₹2.5 lakh in excess of what should have been amount as per the tariff prescribed by the government.

After Centre, Bihar govt announces solatium for Covid orphaned children

RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR @ Patna

A day after the Centre announced a slew of measures to help children orphaned by the Covid-19 pandemic, Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Sunday also made a similar announcement for such kids.

Taking to his social media accounts, Kumar said his government would provide monthly stipends for the bereaved children, a boarding facility for those left with no caretaker, and give special impetus to the education of orphaned girls.

"Boys and girls who have lost their mothers and fathers — with at least one parent succumbing to corona — will get a sum of ₹1,500 every month from the state government till they attain the age of 18 years," Kumar said. He said the aid will be provided under his government's 'Baal Sahaayta Yojana', meant for needy children. The CM further stated that "boys and girls who are left with no guardian to bring them up will be provided shelter at Baal Griha. Priority will be accorded to get such orphaned girls admitted to Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya schools".

According to the state social welfare department, a total number of 1,534 children in Bihar have been found affected during the ongoing second wave of the pandemic following the death of their one or both parents due to the virus. Among all them, 48 children have been found orphaned after the death of their both parents. Former deputy CM Sushil Kumar Modi said 100 donors have also come forward under the Dadhichi Deh Dan Samiti to provide ₹1,000 in the account of each orphaned children per month.

Speaker of Bihar Assembly Vijay Kumar Sinha said all MLAs should step forward and play the role of guardians of these children.

BOMB SCARE IN MUMBAI

Mumbai Police on Sunday conducted a search operation at the Maharashtra government secretariat here after a caller claimed that a bomb was planted on the building, which turned out to be a hoax call

4 ARRESTED ARRESTED IN CHHATTISGARH

	Max	Min		Max	Min
Ahmedabad	39	27	Mumbai	32	28
Bhopal	39	27	Panaji	34	26
Jaipur	39	28	Patna	33	24
Amritsar	41	27	Lucknow	38	23
Chennai	35	27	Port Blair	31	25
Kolkata	35	28	Imphal	28	20
Srinagar	28	13	Chandigarh	38	22

Villagers gather to protest the setting up of a CRPF camp in Silger in Chhattisgarh's south Bastar on Sunday | EXPRESS

Chhattisgarh govt firm on paramilitary camps

EJAZ KAISER @ Raipur

AMID continuing protests by tribal communities against the setting up of a paramilitary camp in south Bastar, the Chhattisgarh state government has adopted a tough stance, saying not one, but six more camps are to come up in the region.

Thousands of residents from 20 villages have been demonstrating against a CRPF camp in Silger, located along the border with two of the state's worst Maoist-affected districts of Sukma and Bijapur, for the past 17 days. The camp was set up in Silger on May 12.

The state government has categorically said that under no circumstances would the Silger camp be shifted or abandoned. The government has called the protesters' demand "unjustified".

"The government is going to establish six more camps in the same region," said Ravindra Choubey, senior cabinet minister and the government spokesperson.

Officials say the camps will bring more security to the region and help facilitate its development.

However, villagers say the new camp will bring in more forces, which, they fear, will lead to atrocities being committed against them.

The villagers also claimed they are fighting for their rights over jal, jungle and jameen' (water, forest and land) that "belong to them".

"We will continue our peaceful protest till the camp is removed from here," the villagers said.

The Bastar Police have blamed the Maoists for instigating tribal communities to oppose the camp. "It's a known fact who all are protesting and why at Silger," said Choubey.

The Bastar police meanwhile are also gathering intelligence inputs about the protesters. The Bastar administration and the police have repeatedly tried to convince the agitators to stop protesting and return to their villages, fearing such big gatherings could spark a rise in Covid cases.

Bengal BJP mum on chief secy's transfer

Ruling TMC attacks the Centre over transfer letter to Alapan Bandopadhyay, says it is yet to get over election loss

PRANAB MONDAL @ Kolkata

THE BJP's central leadership has asked leaders of the party's West Bengal unit not to make comments on the transfer of the state chief secretary Alapan Bandopadhyay to New Delhi.

Sources said, the aim is to keep the party's Bengal unit out of the controversy that has erupted over the transfer of the state's top bureaucrat, which was announced hours after Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee skipped a cyclone review meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday.

The ruling Trinamool Congress has claimed that Bandopadhyay's transfer is yet another example of the BJP practising vendetta politics after its dismal performance in the state Assembly elections.

"Our national leadership has asked us to desist from making any comments related to the chief secretary's transfer. It seems, the party wants to make it clear that it was the Union government's decision, and that the state BJP had no role to play," a senior BJP functionary said in Kolkata.

Alapan Bandopadhyay

Reacting to Bandopadhyay's transfer, Mamata said the BJP has not been able to digest its poor results in the recently-held Assembly elections. She also charged that the Centre is trying to cause harm to the state by transferring an officer who was overseeing relief operations in areas affected by Cyclone Yaas as well as the state's fight against Covid-19.

Both the CPI (M) and Congress also echoed Mamata and described the Centre's transfer order to Bandopadhyay, issued without consulting the state government, as revenge for the TMC defeating the BJP in the state.

Sources in the state secretariat said Bandopadhyay is not likely to report in Delhi on Monday. "He will attend a meeting headed by the chief minister over the issue of the post-cyclone situation and relief operations," said an official of the state government.

The state government is yet to give a clearance to report to Delhi over Banopadhyay's transfer. Nor has the Centre responded to the state government's request to withdraw his transfer letter.

Notable, the West Bengal government had sought a three-month tenure extension for Bandyopadhyay, who was scheduled to retire on May 31. The Centre had approved it.

Cops kill cow slaughter accused: Kids

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Lucknow

CHILDREN of a man who died recently in Uttar Pradesh's Bulandshahar district said their father was thrown down from the rooftop of their house by the local police, which led to his death few days later.

According to the police, Aqeel Qureshi was wanted in connection with cases of buffalo theft and cow slaughter.

"A team of cops came to our house around 1 am. After beating him (father) up with lathis and rifle buts, they threw him down from the rooftop," two daughters and a son (all minors) of Qureshi alleged.

"After entering the house, they caught hold of my father and assaulted him with rifle buts in the head and lathis on other parts of the body before throwing him down from the rooftop," the eldest of three children alleged in a video that has gone viral on social media.

"They (cops) abused my father verbally after throwing him down to the ground. We want justice for our father and the entire family," the three children said on Saturday.

A probe has meanwhile been ordered into the incident. SP (Rural Areas) of Bulandshahar district, Harendra Kumar is conducting the probe.

"We're recording the statements of all concerned," Kumar told this newspaper.

"The man, Aqeel Qureshi, aged around 42 years, was accused in six criminal cases, including four cases of cow slaughter. He was also wanted in connection with a buffalo theft case from October, last year. Coming to know about his presence at the house, the local police went there on the night of May 23 to detain him. But his wife told the police that he wasn't there."

The senior police officer further said though the cops then left the house. But Aqeel, fearing that the cops would return, tried to escape. In the process, he fell down from the terrace.

"His neighbours say that he has done such acts in the past too," Kumar said. The officer said, Aqeel's family rushed him to a hospital in Bulandshahar. He was admitted there under the name Rehan. He was later referred to Aligarh Medical College, and subsequently, to Delhi's Safdarjung Hospital, where he died.

Mehul Choksi

India sends documents to deport Choksi from Dominica

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

INDIA has sent necessary documents to Dominica to facilitate the deportation of fugitive businessman and accused in ₹13,500 crore PNB scam Mehul Choksi.

Choksi was apprehended by the Dominican authorities last week when he was trying to flee to Cuba from Antigua—the country to where he fled to in 2018 and reportedly obtained citizenship there.

However, Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda Gaston Browne said Choksi's nationality issue is unsettled and referred to him as an Indian citizen.

Sources said case files related to Choksi have been sent only to Dominica. "The Ministry of External Affairs is coordinating the case with the governments of Dominica and Antigua while investigative agencies are just helping them with case-related documents," they added.

Browne also confirmed the arrival of a private jet on Friday in Dominica. "My understanding is that the Indian government has sent some documentation from the courts in India to confirm that Choksi is indeed a fugitive and my understanding is that the documentation will be utilised in the court hearing on next Wednesday. The Indian government seems to be going all out to ensure that he is repatriated to India," Browne said.

Browne also called the 62-year-old's attempt to flee Antigua a monumental mistake and has called for his immediate deportation to India. "We respect the jurisdiction of the court over this matter. My request on behalf of the state, for Dominica to consider deporting Choksi directly to India, as a form of state cooperation to apprehend a fugitive, is perfectly acceptable," he added. A court in Antigua has put Choksi's deportation on hold after his lawyers claimed he cannot be sent to India as he is no longer an Indian citizen.

Quad wrongly portrayed, says Army chief

CHIEF of Army Staff Gen MM Naravane said on Sunday that some countries have portrayed the Quad or Quadrilateral coalition as a military alliance to raise unsubstantiated fears" despite no concrete evidence to back their claims.

Asserting that the Quad does not intend to become a military alliance, Gen Naravane said it is meant to be a plurilateral grouping delving into issues specific to the Indo-Pacific region.

The Quad has been focusing on promoting shared democratic ideologies and ensuring a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific against the backdrop of rising global concerns over China's growing assertiveness. "The Quad neither intends nor attempts to be a military alliance. It is meant to be a plurilateral grouping which focuses on issues specific to the Indo-Pacific," he said. "Some countries have portrayed the Quad as a military alliance to raiseunsubstantiated fears despite no concrete evidence to show the same," Naravane said. *PTI*

PROTESTS CONTINUE

Members of Bharatiya Kisan Union take part in a protest march against the three farm bills, in Patiala on Sunday | PTI

J&K teacher's son kills self over withholding of dad's pay

FAYAZ WANI @ Srinagar

A 24-year-old youth, who is the son of a teacher of a government school in Jammu and Kashmir, committed suicide by consuming poison over the authorities holding back his father's salary.

A CID report failed to clear his father's name, and hence, his two-and-a-half year's salary was held back. As per a recent order, all government employees must successfully clear CID verification to receive their salaries. The CID report accused his father Bashir Ahmad Mir of being a former Pakistan-trained militant, who is now working as a teacher. The youth, identified as Shoaib Bashir, posted a video on social media before taking the extreme step.

He died by consumed poison on Friday. Though he was rushed to Srinagar's SMHS hospital, he passed away on Saturday. Before committing suicide, the youth recorded a video complaining about the denial of salary. "My father's salary is being withheld along with that of some other teachers for the last two-and-a-half years. We have been reduced to penury and it has become unbearable for me," Shoaib said in the video. He said he was committing suicide to highlight the sufferings of the teachers.

SIT notice to Kamal Nath over pen drive

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bhopal

THE Special Investigation Team probing the high-profile honey trap case in Madhya Pradesh on Sunday sent a notice to the state's Opposition leader and former CM Kamal Nath asking him to hand over the pen drive/CD pertaining to the case.

In the notice sent to Nath, the SIT informed that the pen drive/DC was a piece of extremely important evidence that could make the probe much easier.

In an apparent threat to the ruling BJP government in the state, Nath, at a recent press conference, said he is still in possession of the pen drive/ CD relating to the scandal.

Five women and a man were arrested in Bhopal and Indore in September 2019 for allegedly trapping well-placed people, including politicians, and blackmailing them with objectionable videos. The ex-CM has also been asked to be present at his residence in Bhopal at 12.30 pm on June 2 for questioning.

On May 21, responding to a question on FIR against his former Cabinet colleague and Congress leader Umang Singar over the suicide of a 40-year-old woman, Nath asked the BJP not to play dirty politics. He then warned the government that he has a pen drive/CD relating to the honey trap case.

With return of Raje, factionalism in Rajasthan BJP

RAJESH ASNANI @ Jaipur

WITH former Rajasthan chief minister Vasundhra Raje returning to active political life, the state BJP is seeing the emergence of factionalism.

Her supporters are distributing food to the needy in different parts of the state under a campaign called *Vasundhra Jan Rasoi* (Vasundhra public kitchen). The campaign puts the spotlight on Raje, not the party. The campaign was launched on May 21 by distributing food packets to about 300 families in Hasanpura Basti of Jaipur in the presence of Yunus Khan, former cabinet minister, who is considered very close to Raje. "Food packets are being distributed through 'Vasundhara Jan Rasoi' to the needy during this calamity by former CM Raje's supporters and fans across the state," said Yunus Khan. Supporters of the former chief minister are calling it public service.

But, internal sources say the participation of many sitting BJP MPs, former ministers, MLAs are to demonstrate the political clout of the former chief minister.

A separate campaign to help the poor is already being run by the state BJP unit. It is called 'Seva Hi Sangathan'. This includes blood donation campaigns, decoction, mask and sanitiser distribution and many other services. Demands have already been made to make Raje as the chief ministerial face in 2023 elections.

EXPRESS READ

Toll in UP hooch tragedy rises to 25

Aligarh: The death toll in the Aligarh hooch tragedy climbed to 25 on Sunday, officials in Aligarh said.BJP Lok Sabha MP from Aligarh Satish Gautam, however, said according to information gathered by him, the death toll has crossed 35. In a series of raids on Sunday, six police teams managed to nab four more people wanted in connection with Friday's tragedy.

Haryana adopts child orphaned by Covid

Chandigarh: Orphaned at birth, adopted by a Faridabad couple and now orphaned again after losing both his step-parents to COVID-19. That is the story of a 16-year-old child, now staying at an ashram in Gurgaon. Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar came across the boy with special needs in Gurgaon and announced that the government will 'adopt' him.

Heavy penalty for noise pollution

The government of Uttarakhand has decided to impose heavy penalty on noise pollution under the Union government's Noise Pollution Regulation Control Act, 2000. According to the new set of guidelines, if an individual is responsible for noise that goes beyond the specified decibel, he/she will be fined `1,000. For the second violation, the penalty will increase to `2,500. For the third time, it will be `5,000. At religious places, if the noise exceeds the specified decibel, the first-time penalty will be `5,000. Second and third violations will invite a fine of `10,000 and `15,000 respectively

DEHRADUN DIARY

VINEET UPADHYAY
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India home to 4 species from 42 mn years ago: Research

Studies conducted at Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee have found that India was home to at least four different animal species, including some very primitive ones that lived about 42 million years ago, and five another species that thrived about 20 million years ago. The studies were conducted by a team led by Professor Sunil Bajpai, his students and his collaborators. They examined the fossilized remains of sea cows found in the Kutch region of Gujarat. "Ongoing studies show that the actual diversity could be even higher and India was a major centre of evolution and diversification in the past, not only for sea cows but also for other associated mammals such as whales," said Bajpai, who is the Head of Earth Sciences Department at IIT-Roorkee.

State takes delivery of 15K vials of drug used to treat black fungus

Uttarakhand took delivery of 15,000 vials of Amphotericin-B--the drug used to treat black fungus infection—last week. The state had begun the production of the drug on May 24. The vials were delivered on Thursday, according to sources. As of Sunday, 192 cases of the black fungus infection were reported in the state. While 13 people have been cured of the infection, as many as 15 have succumbed to it. Uttarakhand has imposed a strict Covid curfew till June 1.

Snow leopard spotted in low-altitude area

For the first time, a snow leopard was spotted in the Valley of Flowers National Park at an altitude of 11,400 feet in the Garhwal Himalayas. Last month, the elusive big cat was spotted in the Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve at an altitude of 10,000 feet. Images from surveillance cameras confirmed the presence of the species in the low-altitude areas. Usually, the snow leopard is found above the tree line at an altitude of 18,000 feet. At present, according to estimates, Uttarakhand has around 86 snow leopards. Last November, the state government started a first-of-its-kind survey over a 12,800-square-km-area covering 10 forest divisions where the species is found. Despite delays caused by the pandemic, the results are expected in November

Israel, Egypt talk truce with Hamas

Focus on rebuilding Gaza Strip, release of Israeli soldiers and citizens held by Hamas

CAIRO

EGYPT and Israel held high-level talks in both countries on Sunday to shore up a fragile truce between Israel and the Hamas militant group and rebuild the Gaza Strip after a punishing 11-day war that left parts of the seaside enclave in ruins.

Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shukry received his Israeli counterpart, Gabi Ashkenazi, in Cairo on Sunday as part of Egypt's efforts to revive the Mideast peace process and to 'build on the cease-fire in Gaza,' the Egyptian Foreign Ministry said.

It was the first public visit by an Israeli foreign minister to Egypt since 2008, the Israeli Embassy in Cairo said. It wrote that the two ministers would discuss topics including the cease-fire and the release of Israeli soldiers and citizens being held by Hamas.

"We will discuss establishing a permanent ceasefire with #Hamas, a mechanism for providing humanitarian aid and the reconstruction of #Gaza with a pivotal role played by the intl. community," Ashkenazi tweeted upon arrival in Cairo.

Hamas is holding the remains of two Israeli soldiers killed in a 2014 war. It also is holding two Israeli civilians who were captured after entering Gaza.

As part of the cease-fire efforts, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu hosted Abbas Kamel, Egypt's intelligence chief, in Jerusalem. Netanyahu said he had raised the issue of returning the remains of soldiers and the two civilians as well as Israeli demands to prevent Hamas from gaining strength or diverting resources meant for the civilian population.

An Egyptian official said Kamel would also meet with Palestinian officials in the West Bank before heading to Gaza for talks with Hamas leaders. The intelligence agency, which is Egypt's equivalent of the CIA, usually handles Egypt's ties with Hamas and other Palestinian militant groups in Gaza.

MENA said Kamel would convey a message from el-Sissi to Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, affirming 'Egypt's full support to the Palestinian people.' During a visit to the region last week, Secretary of State Antony Blinken said he was seeking to bolster Abbas and weaken Hamas as part of the cease-fire efforts. *AP*

Supporters of the Palestinians hold photographs of Palestinian children who were killed in the Israel-Gaza feud during the National March for Palestine demonstration at Lincoln Memorial, in Washington on Saturday | AP/PTI

Netanyahu's rival seeks unity deal with his opponents

JERUSALEM

THE head of a small hard-line party on Sunday said he would try to form a unity government with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's opponents, taking a major step toward ending the 12-year rule of the Israeli leader.

In a nationwide address, Yamina party leader Naftali Bennett said he had decided to join forces with the country's opposition leader, Yair Lapid. The pair have until Wednesday to complete a deal in which they are expected to each serve two years as prime minister in a rotation deal.

"It's my intention to do my utmost in order to form a national unity government along with my friend Yair Lapid, so that, God willing, together we can save the country from a tailspin and return Israel to its course," Bennett said.

A unity government would end the cycle of deadlock that has plunged the country into four inconclusive elections over the past two years. *AP*

Judge says blame in Italy cable car deaths rests with service technician

ROME

THE three suspects in Italy's cable car disaster that killed 14 people were allowed to leave prison on Sunday after a judge indicated that for now blame fell on just one: a service technician who intentionally disabled the car's emergency brake because it kept locking spontaneously.

Judge Donatella Banci Buonamici said there wasn't sufficient evidence suggesting the owner of the Mottarone cable car company, Luigi Nerini, or the maintenance chief, Enrico Perocchio, knew that the technician had deactivated the brake on several occasions even before the May 23 disaster.

After evaluating prosecutors' request for continued detention of the three, Buonamici determined there was no flight risk, ordered the managers freed while allowing the technician, Gabriele Tadini, to leave under house arrest. The three men, who remain under investigation, left Verbania prison early Sunday, accompanied by their lawyers.

Fourteen people were killed when the lead cable of the Mottarone funicular overlooking Lake Maggiore in northern Italy snapped and the emergency brake failed to prevent the cable car from reeling at high speed backward down the support line.

The cable car pulled off the line entirely after passing the support pylon, crashed to the ground and then rolled down the mountain until it was stopped by a stand of trees.

The lone survivor, 5-year-old Eitan Biran, remains hospitalised but conscious, with his aunt looking after him. Eitan's Israeli-born parents, his younger brother and his great-grandparents were killed in the disaster and their remains were sent back to Israel.

It isn't known why the pulling cable snapped.

The Vipiteno, Italy-based company that maintains the lift, Leitner SpA, has said 'no irregularities were detected" during the November 2020 magnetic testing of the lead cable, and that every other annual check hadn't turned up problems either. *AP*

Rescuers at work by the cable car that crashed in Italy on May 23 | FILE PIC (AFP)

British intelligence believes Covid lab leak theory 'feasible': Report

LONDON

BRITISH intelligence agencies now believe it is "feasible" that the Covid pandemic began with a coronavirus leak from a Chinese bio laboratory, a media report said on Sunday, prompting Vaccines Minister Nadhim Zahawi to demand that the WHO must fully investigate the origins of the deadly virus.

The origins of the COVID-19 remain a widely debated topic, with some scientists and politicians maintaining that the possibility of a lab leak of the deadly virus exists.

Western intelligence, including in Britain, at first considered there was only a "remote" chance that it had leaked from the laboratory, where research is conducted into bat-derived coronaviruses, including one closely associated with Covid.

But there has since been a reassessment, and a lab escape is thought "feasible", The Sunday Times reported, citing sources. "There might be pockets of evidence that take us one way, and evidence that takes us another way. The Chinese will lie either way. I don't think we will ever know," said a western intelligence source familiar with UK involvement in the investigation. *PTI*

A Cypriot woman casts her ballot at a polling station in the capital Nicosia | AFP

Small parties look to make gains in Cyprus parliamentary voting

NICOSIA

CYPRIOTS on Sunday voted to elect a new parliament, with opinion polls suggesting that the country's two main parties will hemorrhage support as disenchanted voters seek out alternatives among smaller parties.

The election won't affect the running of the government on the divided Mediterranean island nation, as executive power rests in the hands of the president, who is elected separately.

The island's 558,000 eligible voters were choosing among 21 political parties for the 56 Greek Cypriot seats in parliament.

Casting his ballot, Cypriot President Nicos Anastasiades urged citizens to 'abandon the couch' and vote so they won't 'give others the right to decide for them.' Among the parties projected to make gains is the far-right ELAM party, whose strong showing in the previous election five years ago surprised many.

Among the key campaign issues were the country's handling of the Covid pandemic and the hoped-for economic reboot as the country ramps up vaccinations.

Migration has also been an issue as the Cypriot government insists it has exceeded its limits and can no longer receive more migrants. *AP*

Boris marries fiancée Carrie Symonds in pvt ceremony

British PM Boris Johnson and his partner Carrie Symonds wave from the steps of number 10 Downing Street in London | FILE PIC (AP/PTI)

LONDON

BRITISH Prime Minister Boris Johnson has married his fiancee Carrie Symonds in a secretly-planned wedding at Westminster Cathedral, becoming the first British premier to get married while in office in nearly 200 years.

The couple tied the knot at the Roman Catholic Westminster Cathedral with a small group of their friends and family present for the ceremony, the Downing Street confirmed on Sunday, hours after the British media reported the news of the private wedding.

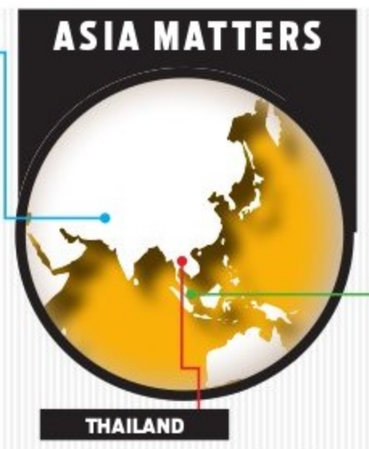
"The Prime Minister and Ms. Symonds were married yesterday afternoon in a small ceremony at Westminster Cathedral," a Downing Street spokesman said.

The spokesman added that the couple would celebrate again with family and friends next summer, with their honeymoon also delayed until then.

The prime minister has already returned to work, the BBC reported. The wedding was officiated by Father Daniel Humphreys, who had given the couple pre-marriage instructions, and oversaw the baptism of their son Wilfred, who was born in April 2020.

This is the first marriage for 33-year-old Carrie Johnson, while it is the 56-year-old prime minister's third. *PTI*

ASIA MATTERS



AFGHANISTAN

Govt, Taliban blame each other for shell that killed 7

Kabul: A mortar shell hit a wedding ceremony in northern Afghanistan, killing at least seven people, mostly children, and wounding at least four others, a police spokesman said. Taliban insurgents attacked a government security checkpoint in the district of Tagab and one of their mortar shells hit a civilian house, Kapisa provincial police spokesman Shayeq Shoresh said Sunday. He said the attack happened the night before. But Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid in a tweet accused police of firing several mortar shells toward the civilian house, causing the casualties. Both the Taliban and government forces routinely blame each other for attacks. The assailants are rarely identified and the public is seldom informed of the results of investigations into the many attacks in the capital. AP

THAILAND

Ukrainian ambassador dies on resort island

Bangkok: The Ukrainian ambassador to Thailand collapsed and died on Sunday while on a resort island with his family, authorities said. Andrii Beshta, 44, was declared dead on Lipe Island in southern Satun province, Gov. Ekkarat Leesen told The Associated Press. Police quoted his teenage son, who was staying in the same hotel room, as saying his father vomited and fainted early Sunday. He said he was feeling fine before. Police said they suspect he may have suffered a heart failure. AP

SINGAPORE

PM to update citizens on tackling Covid

Singapore: Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said on Sunday he will share his government's plan on how to combat the COVID-19 pandemic while slowly reopening the country for business in a speech to be broadcast on Monday. The prime minister said the Covid restrictions were working and the government was taking strict measures to keep Singaporeans safe from the deadly virus. "Thank you for staying home and complying with the guidelines," said Lee while announcing his address to the nation in a Facebook post. "The number of new community cases has stabilised over the last two weeks. Our tightened curbs to keep Singaporeans safe are working. Tomorrow, I intend to share with you how we plan to keep Covid under control, while progressively opening up again" he said. PTI

EXPRESS READ

2 dead, over 20 hurt in banquet hall shooting

Hialeah (US): Two people died and nearly 25 people were injured in a shooting outside a banquet hall in South Florida, police said. The gunfire erupted on Sunday at the El Mula Banquet Hall in Miami-Dade County, near Hialeah, police told news outlets. The banquet hall had been rented out for a concert. Three people got out of an SUV and opened fire into a crowd outside with assault rifles and handguns, police director Alfredo 'Freddy' Ramirez III said. Authorities believe the shooting was targeted. "These are cold blooded murderers that shot indiscriminately into a crowd and we will seek justice," Ramirez said in a tweet. AP

Pope invites Lebanese Christians to Vatican

Vatican City: Pope Francis has invited representatives of Lebanon's Christian community to the Vatican on July 1 for a day of prayer and reflection 'about the worrisome situation in the country.' The Pope announced the encounter during his Sunday noon blessing, saying the aim was to 'pray together for the gift of peace and stability."
He asked for prayers ahead of the meeting and for Lebanon itself so the country can enjoy 'a more serene future.' Lebanon has been enduring an unparalleled financial, economic and political crisis for months, which has been worsened by the Covid pandemic. AP

Nepal's Oppn alliance urges state institutions not to support Oli govt's 'unconstitutional' activities

KATHMANDU

NEPAL'S Opposition alliance on Sunday urged all state institutions not to support Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli government's "unconstitutional" and "anti-democratic" activities that could have a lasting impact on the country and people at a time when a writ petition is being heard by the Supreme Court challenging the dissolution of the House of Representatives.

The alliance also expressed hope that the SC verdict on the petitions against the dissolution of the lower house of Parliament will come in its favour, according to media reports.

In a joint statement, leaders of the Opposition parties warned the government to refrain from undertaking any activity that could have a lasting effect on the country and people, The Himalayan Times reported.

Nepali Congress President Sher Bahadur Deuba, Communist Party of Nepal- Maoist Centre Chair Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda', leader of the disgruntled faction of CPN-Unified Marxist'Leninist Madhav Kumar Nepal, co-chair of Janata Samajbadi Party-Nepal Upendra Yadav and vice-chair of Rashtriya Janamorcha Durga Poudel signed the statement.

"We are certain that the SC will safeguard the Constitution and give verdict in our favour," the statement said. "We had staked claim to the post of Prime Minister with the support of 149 lawmakers. The government cannot decide on dissolving the House in this case,' reads a joint press statement of the Opposition alliance.

> **We staked claim to the PM post with the support of 149 lawmakers. The govt cannot decide on dissolving the House in this case**
>
> Statement of Nepal's Oppn alliance

At present, 136 votes are needed to form a majority government. The Opposition alliance moved the Apex Court demanding reinstatement of the House of Representatives and appointment of Sher Bahadur Deuba as the PM in line with Article 76 (5) of the Constitution.

A Constitutional Bench of Nepal's Supreme Court on Friday heard 30 writ petitions against the dissolution of the lower house. Sunday's hearing was mainly focused on the formation of the Constitutional Bench to hear the writ petitions which demand the restoration of the lower house dissolved on May 22. *PTI*

Ethiopians take to streets against US sanctions over brutal Tigray war

KAMPALA

THOUSANDS of Ethiopians gathered in the nation's capital Sunday to protest outside pressure on the government over its brutal war in Tigray.

Protesters at the rally in Addis Ababa carried banners that criticised the United States and others in the international community who are voicing concern over atrocities in Tigray, where Ethiopian forces are hunting down the region's ousted and now-fugitive leaders.

Troops from neighbouring Eritrea are fighting in Tigray on the side of Ethiopian government forces, in defiance of international calls for their withdrawal.

But the protesters in Addis Ababa carried placards that said 'Ethiopian young people denounce the western intervention.' Others said Ethiopia's sovereignty was at stake.

The US said last week it has started restricting visas for government and military officials of Ethiopia and Eritrea, who are seen as undermining efforts to resolve the fighting in Tigray, home to an estimated 6 million of Ethiopia's 110 million people. Besides the visa restrictions, Washington is imposing wide-ranging restrictions on economic and security assistance to Ethiopia.

Protesters during a rally against the US imposing restrictions on economic and security aid over the conflict in Tigray region in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia | AFP

Atrocities including brutal gang-rapes, extrajudicial killings and forced evictions have been part of the violence in Tigray, according to victims, witnesses, local authorities and aid groups. Thousands of people are estimated to have died.

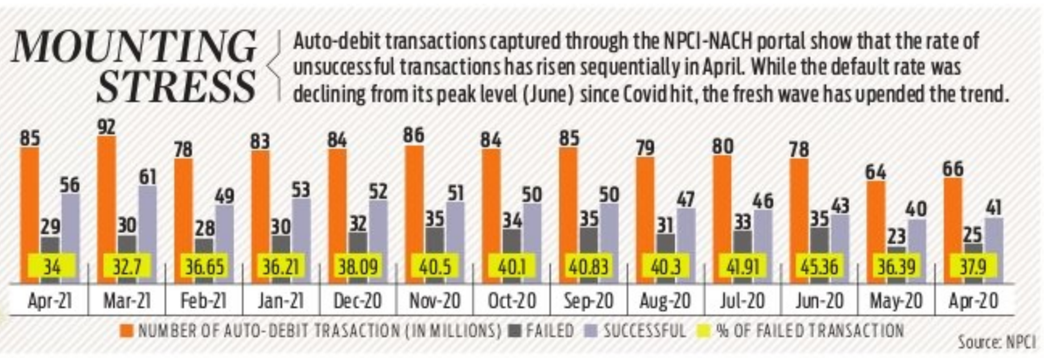
The Ethiopian government called the US action 'misguided' and 'regrettable.' "The Ethiopian government will not be deterred by this unfortunate decision of the US administration," said the statement tweeted by the ministry of foreign affairs.

"If such a resolve to meddle in our internal affairs and undermining the century-old bilateral ties continues unabated, the government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia will be forced to reassess its relations with the United States, which might have implications beyond our bilateral relationship,' said the statement.

The crisis began in November after Ethiopia accused former leaders of the Tigray People's Liberation Front, or TPLF, of ordering an attack on an Ethiopian army base in the region. Troops sent by Ethiopia's leader, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, quickly ousted the TPLF from major cities and towns, but guerrilla fighting is still reported across Tigray.

Over 2 million people have been displaced by the war. *AP*

₹1,730 cr was pulled out of Indian equities in the so far during the month of May by foreign portfolio investors amidst rising worries over the second Covid wave


MOUNTING STRESS
Auto-debit transactions captured through the NPCI-NACH portal show that the rate of unsuccessful transactions has risen sequentially in April. While the default rate was declining from its peak level (June) since Covid hit, the fresh wave has upended the trend.
Apr-21: 85, 29, 56, 34
Mar-21: 92, 30, 61, 32.7
Feb-21: 78, 28, 49, 36.65
Jan-21: 83, 30, 53, 36.21
Dec-20: 84, 32, 52, 38.09
Nov-20: 86, 35, 51, 40.5
Oct-20: 84, 34, 50, 40.1
Sep-20: 85, 35, 50, 40.83
Aug-20: 79, 31, 47, 40.3
Jul-20: 80, 33, 46, 41.91
Jun-20: 78, 35, 43, 45.36
May-20: 64, 23, 40, 36.39
Apr-20: 66, 25, 41, 37.9
NUMBER OF AUTO-DEBIT TRASACTION (IN MILLIONS) FAILED SUCCESSFUL % OF FAILED TRANSACTION
Source: NPCI

Covid 2.0: Ways to get out of debt trap amid a surge in loan defaults

At least 29 million auto-debit transactions such as EMIs worth ₹22,000 crore failed in April

SESA SEN @ New Delhi

INDIANS are trapped in a whirlwind of uncertainties — financial and health — that has quickly thrown them off track in terms of managing finances. In a worrying repetition of the first Covid-19 wave led economic distress, borrowers are holding on to funds even at the risk of defaulting as efforts to slow the spread of infections continue to inflict unemployment, pay cuts and higher medical expenses.

In April, for instance, 29 million auto-debit transactions worth ₹22,000 crore conducted through the National Automated Clearing House (NACH) failed, primarily due to insufficient funds. This reflects a bounce rate (read: unsuccessful transaction) of 34.05 per cent in April as against 32.76 per cent in March or pre-second wave. Simply put, these are recurring payments like equated-monthly-installments (EMIs), utility bill payments and insurance premiums where borrowers have agreed to auto-debit mandates and funds are drawn monthly from their bank account. In value terms, as much as 27.9 per cent of such transactions were unsuccessful in April against 27.5 per cent last month with most banks warning that it could worsen in May as more states imposed lockdowns.

Recently, HDFC Bank CEO Sashidhar Jagdishan said that retail loans may see higher delinquencies in the near term and borrowers who had to avail cover under regulatory dispensations like moratorium and restructuring after the first wave are more likely to default. For borrowers, losing income has meant making tough choices, such as skipping a loan payment, but here's what you need to know: Non-payment of previous loans can affect your CIBIL score and lenders will be reluctant to give you a loan in future. In case of multiple loans, a lender can also impose penalty on the defaults and late payments. This usually applies to an unsecured loan where the bank doesn't have any collateral as a guarantee against non-payment. Multiple defaults or zero repayments of interest or principal within 90 days past due, could lead you into a debt-trap. And getting out of a debt-trap is not at all an easy task. Let's look at the options one can consider to avoid a debt trap:

Retail borrowers top loan recast plan
Restructured loans (as of March 31, 2021)

	Total value (in ₹cr)	Value of retail loans (in ₹cr)	Retail loans as % of total
HDFC Bank	6,508	5,456	84
Axis Bank	845	504	60
Kotak Bnak	122	82	68

Source: Financial results

RETAIL LOAN TO SEE HIGHER DEFAULTS

Banks expect retail loans to see higher deliquencies in the near term. According to analysts of Emkat Global Financial servives, severely affected states account for about 48 per cent of retail credit.

Will banks let you skip a loan payment?

If you find yourself unable to pay the upcoming EMI on time, you need to be proactive and communicate your situation to the lender. Your bank likely offers deferment and forbearance plans, but you will first have to take the initiative and ask for help. You can then avail one of these options:

Reduce EMI: If you are struggling with the EMI amount, consider having the monthly outgo reduced. You can approach the lending institution and request them to increase your loan tenure. This, experts say, would reduce your monthly EMI amount though you may end up paying a higher amount in interest. Once your financial situation is sturdier, you should increase the EMI amount again.

Benefit from restructuring: If a borrower is unable to maintain the terms and conditions of his loan, he can request the lender to relax the same. This may lead to a reduction of charges, lowering of interest rate, lengthening of the loan tenure, a moratorium on interest, among other relief measures. The Reserve Bank of India has recently allowed eligible borrowers, who did not use the first loan moratorium offered last year, to avail of the second one and those who did avail of the first one can get the moratorium period extended. Restructuring applies to all kinds of loans, which means that you will not be labelled as a defaulter if you repay the installments post this period.

Liquidate the investments: Experts say to unburden from an outstanding loan, borrowers can opt for liquidating the underperforming or non-performing investments to substantially save interest mounting up on such loans.

WHAT LIES AHEAD FOR YOUR MONEY

RAJAS KELKAR

INFLATION, slow economic recovery, lack of investment, and inadequate jobs stare at you in the year ahead. All of that not only affects the broader economy but also influences your finances. There is more to it.

The Reserve Bank of India annual report for 2020-21 warns of a stock market bubble as more money in the financial system leads to asset price inflation. For share prices to remain high, the profit growth in significant companies needs to sustain.

The RBI annual report, presented a quarter early this year, cautions the government on inflationary pressures and poor private investment. It argues that India needs economic growth led by substantial investment from the private and public sectors. Presently, only the government is spending money through multiple infrastructure projects. For India's economy to get to a sustainable economic growth path, private companies must start investing in expanding capacity and creating more jobs.

The report is a wealth of information. It may be a good idea for you to spare some time to give it a read once. If you belong to the financial sector, you may be able to grasp several things quickly. However, if you are new to the world of finance, you must make it a point to read the document.

Begin with the outlook

The RBI's assessment of the outlook for the economy and inflation is the most important thing from your standpoint.

"The near-term outlook is clouded, with an accentuation of downside risks and potential externalities of global spillovers," said the report. It recommends designing public policies that put us back on a secure path of sustainable and robust growth with macroeconomic and financial stability. These two sentences are significant for interest rates and financial markets. The RBI is saying that India's economy is vulnerable to shocks in the future. These could be both internal and external.

India needs a faster pace of economic growth to create opportunities for businesses. The government is spending money on building roads, metro networks, airports and other infrastructure. At the same time, there is intense pressure on the government finances to enhance healthcare spending. While it is a state subject under the Indian constitution, the central government must provide the money for any spending by states on health. If harsh health conditions increase their borrowing from the market, it could lead to a sharp increase in overall government borrowing. India's healthcare spending is less than 1 per cent of the gross domestic product or GDP and the worst among G20 countries. Any significant rise in spending will call for an increase in government expenditure.

While the government mulls expanding the healthcare in the country through increased spending, it also needs to ensure that there is enough money in the system for businesses to borrow and expand capacity. Many experts are recommending the printing of money to pay people for the economic fallout of the pandemic. If that is done, it could enhance the inflation threat to the economy. Increased government expenditure, declining tax revenue limits the amount of money the government can print. Runaway inflation is the last thing that India's economy needs. It will throw everything out of gear.

When RBI says India needs sustainable growth with macroeconomic stability, it usually means growth without letting inflation raise the head.

Your money

The RBI annual report warns against a potential threat to inflation that could erode the value of money. In one of the boxes, the RBI also warns of a stock market bubble brewing. A study of share prices presented in the annual report said that share prices are gaining in India on increased money supply from within and foreign portfolio investors. There is a limited relationship with fundamentals like the financial performance of a company. For the current rally in the stock market to sustain, companies have to turn in more robust profit growth over the next two years. Interest rates and corporate profits are two crucial factors that determine your financial future. If we have to go by the RBI annual report, there are risks ahead to both. That does not mean you need to stop investing and leave your money in the bank. Diversifying your investments across asset classes is the key.

(The author is editor-in-chief at www.moneyminute.in)

MONEY-WISE

A TALE OF THREE ASSET CLASSES

WITH recent news flows accurately reflecting the second Covid wave related turmoil nowv prevalent across India, it is hardly surprising that a sense of panic seems to have seized the minds of investors and many are actually bailing out of carefully constructed investment portfolios. It is in such times that a guiding hand could be the difference between an investor committing financial hara-kiri or staying the course with the requisite re-balancing of investments across traditional asset-classes.

Gold is a popular asset class in India, albeit more consumption than investment driven. The optimal routes for investors seeking liquidity here are the Exchange Traded Funds listed at the bourses and the Fund of Funds Option offered by Mutual Funds. An additional SIP in the latter could serve the dual purpose of potential capital appreciation as well as a hedge against any vertical fall in the equity markets of the kind last witnessed in March 2020. While in the near term, an additional exposure to Gold in the form of a Tactical Allocation can be considered, I would tend to hesitate to cross the upper boundary I have set for this sub-asset class in my portfolio.

Bank Fixed Deposits still have a space in the minds of investors, though relentless rate cuts by the RBI and the banks have left investors less enamored about this option than they were about 18 months ago. With debt mutual funds being viewed with a fair element of suspicion post an unsavory fiasco last year, investors without immediate liquidity concerns have begun seeking safe haven in innovative Insurance products that guarantee better than fixed deposit returns with the additional benefits of being tax free and providing additional insurance cover.

And it is thus that we move to the higher risk Equity asset class and start by raising the million dollar question — why the Indian equity markets are holding up even in the face of a raging pandemic, likely shrinking of the economy and an economic revival cycle that may be further stretched.

FINANCIAL ADVICE

ASHOK KUMAR
Head of LKW-India. He can be reached at ceolotus@hotmail.com

Well, equity markets usually thrive on hope and discount not the present gloom but the prospect of a better future six to nine months down the line. Although the Vaccine policy in India has thus far faced more bottlenecks than success, there seems to be belief in the market that with several States set to directly import.

Vaccines and embark on an aggressive Vaccination drive, there could still be light at the end of the tunnel. However, with Equities at this stage, using the SIP and STP route via mutual funds could be optimal. Remember though, one will need to be patient and disciplined as it does not take much at the bourses for hope to turn to despair and vice-versa.

A well calibrated approach is thus the need of the hour. Participating blindfolded at this stage could dent one's portfolio. Those lacking the requisite experience and expertise would do well to seek professional guidance.

TODAY'S STOCK PICK

ENDURANCE TECHNOLOGY

Current Price ₹1,489.8

Target Price ₹1,750

Endurance Technologies reported a strong all-round beat in 4QFY21, with both businesses surprising with their performances. While business recovery in the EU continues strongly, the India business has witnessed the impact of the second Covid-19 wave. The company has won new business worth INR6.4b p.a. in FY21 and has total new orders worth INR12b.

Disclaimer: The views and recommendations made above are that of the individual analyst or broking company, and not that of *TNIE*.

— Motilal Oswal Securities Limited

Nifty closes at record high, Sensex likely to follow suit: Experts

ARSHAD KHAN @ New Delhi

WITH the Nifty breaching its previous peak of 15,432 on Friday, experts feel that Sensex or the 30-stock index will also touch a new peak in coming sessions and may gain around 3,500-6,000 points by the end of this year. Sensex is still over 1,000 points away from 52,516 — a high recorded in February.

"We are expecting the bull run to continue and till December 2021 we would see 17500 on the nifty and 57500 on the Sensex," said Shrikant Chouhan, Executive Vice President, Equity Technical Research at Kotak Securities.

After a temporary break, mainly due to weak global cues and peaking of second Covid-19 wave, India's equity market has started to surge since the last two weeks. With the country seeing a dip in daily fresh cases, Nifty50 gained 260.35 points or 1.72 per cent during the week to close at a record high of 15,435.65 while BSE Sensex was up by 882.40 points or 1.75 per cent to 51,422.88.

I expect there is room for 8-10% of upside from current levels and NSE Nifty-50 may end the calender year at 16,500-16,800. BSE's Sensex may cross 55,000 till the end of this year

Gaurav Garg, head (Research) CapitalVia

Gaurav Garg Head of Research CapitalVia Global Research believes that the bull run might continue, however not as sharp as they have seen last year. "I expect there is room for 8-10 per cent of upside from current levels and NSE Nifty-50 might end the year at 16,500-16,800. BSE's Sensex might cross 55,000 till the end of this calendar year," Garg added. According to him, strong global sentiments along with better-than-expected quarterly numbers across sectors in the coming quarters will be the key going forward. That apart, the monsoon season and vaccination drive will also be very important for the market.

Chouhan noted that the drive will be due to optimism on economic recovery. Based on the trend of the currency, the foreign institutional investment inflow may increase for emerging markets.

Research and broking house Morgan Stanley in a note said that India's equities are likely to outperform their emerging market peers in 2021. It kept its December 2021 target for the S&P BSE Sensex unchanged at 55,000 levels (base case; 50 per cent probability) for now —an upside of around 10 per cent from the current levels. Morgan Stanley went on to add that in a bull-case scenario (30 per cent probability), the Sensex can touch 61,000 levels — an upside of around 22 per cent from the current levels, while in a bear case scenario (20 per cent probability) it can go down to 41,000 levels by December 2021.

Stock wise, Chouhan pointed out that Commodities, Real Estate, Agro Commodities, Pharmaceuticals, Technology should outperform others while FMCG, Auto and Financials may underperform this year.

According to Garg, the broader indices are most likely to show stronger performance compared to large caps.

"One thing that has changed is the commodity cycle which has turned up, and this might help certain sectors where traction is likely to be observed such as metals, sugar and textile. Investors should try to accumulate these stocks at any dip as stocks have rallied much and a correction is expected out of some profit booking. Rate sensitive stocks might show some underperformance which includes Banking, NBFCs, Automobiles, Real Estate etc," he added.

Deposit insurance corporation settles ₹993 cr claims as 6 banks failed in FY21

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ New Delhi

HOW safe is your bank where you are putting your hard-earned money? Given the banking crisis in recent years and the PMC Bank fraud, people should be very wary of financial institutions they are banking with. The recent cases of bank failures — especially the cooperative banks — have enhanced the significance of deposit insurance in India.

The RBI annual report released recently says that five cooperative banks and one local area bank were liquidated in 2020-21. According to the annual report, the Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation, which provides deposit insurance in case of failure of banks, has processed claims amounting to ₹993 crore during 2020-21 to ensure payment to insured depositors of liquidated banks. Of this, the corporation has settled claims amounting to ₹564 crore in respect of nine co-operative banks during 2020-21. An amount of ₹330 crore has been settled in case of one cooperative bank in April 2021.

However, the net outgo of funds towards settlement of claims from the Corporation was also lower as there was a recovery of ₹568 crore during 2020-21. Deposit insurance in India covers all deposits up to ₹5 lakh. The number of fully protected stood at 247.8 crore or 98.1 per cent of the total number of accounts.

EXPRESS READ

Banks to lend up to `5 lakh for Covid care

New Delhi: Public Sector Banks (PSBs) have announced to provide unsecured loans of up to ₹5 lakh to individuals — salaried, non-salaried and pensioners to meet their and family members' Covid-19 treatment cost. The repayment tenure is 5 years and SBI would charge interest of 8.5% per annum. Other banks will soon notify their interest rate. Banks have also offered to provide upto ₹2 crore as healthcare business loan to existing hospitals, nursing homes for setting up oxygen plants under the credit guarantee scheme.

IRDAI asks insurers for speedy settlement

New Delhi: Regulator IRDAI has asked life insurers to step up settlement of life insurance claims in all the states affected by cyclones Tauktae and Yaas. General and standalone health insurance companies have also been asked to mitigate the hardships of the affected insured population by ensuring immediate registration and settlement of eligible claims There are reports of loss of lives and property due to cyclones Tauktae and Yaas which have primarily affected districts in Odisha, Maharashtra, Gujarat and West Bengal.

Close miss: Mary settles for silver

38-year-old loses to Kazakhstan's Nazym in the final of Asian C'ships; three men in final

ANMOL GURUNG @ Chennai

THERE was a hint of disbelief in MC Mary Kom's face when the referee raised her rival's hand, thereby signalling the victor after a gripping final. Mary's Kazakhstan opponent Nazym Kyzaibay, 11 years junior to the six-time world champion, walked up to Mary immediately and gave her a customary hug. Before they did that, Mary nodded, perhaps acknowledging that it was very close but not close enough to merit a gold medal.

In the much-anticipated Asian Championships 51 kg encounter in Dubai on Sunday, Mary Kom made a measured start. A physical sport to a lay-

man's eyes but the opening bout was about intelligence. Both boxers were trying to probe each other's game, trying to find the opening to gain early advantage. Mary — who did manage to get a few solid hits — was not willing to let her guard down but so was Kyzaibay, who also had her share of punches against her more famed rival.

The second round was bound to be an even bigger test. At 38, Mary is not getting younger and coming into the contest, she has had just a few competitive bouts in a year or so. Kyzaibay seemed to have taken note of that as she looked to be the aggressor, testing the endurance of Mary — who continued to dance around the ring. With the Kazakh boxer standing firm and putting sustained pressure, Mary seemed to be on the back foot towards the close. Despite that, Mary did hold firm, not losing her composure and staying in the contest.

The Kazakh boxer retained good rhythm in the final round and was able to withstand pressure from Mary. In the end, the judges marked 3-2 (split verdict) in Kazakh's favour. "It was supposed to be a close bout. It seemed difficult to score. In my opinion, Mary clearly won the first round. But then, maybe, Mary got a little bit tired... the Kazakh boxer made a strong comeback. I feel the judges gave the second and third round in the Kazakh boxer's favour," he said.

Gold for Pooja

Pooja Rani (75 kg), who was making her first appearance in the ongoing edition, outboxed Mavluda Movlonova of Uzbekistan 5-0 to clinch India's first gold medal in the ongoing edition. Pooja had bagged gold in the 81 kg category in 2019.

Last men standing

Amit Panghal (52 kg), Shiva Thapa (64 kg) and Sanjeet (91 kg), the three finalists in the men's section, will look to finish on a high on Monday. Thapa enters the final on the back of an impressive win over top seed and defending champ Bakhodov Usmonov. For someone who was not even part of the plans, this is a big boost for Thapa.

3

With Jürgen Klopp, Hansi Flick and Thomas Tuchel winning the title, this is the first time the European Cup/Champions League has been won in three consecutive years by three different managers of the same nationality since 1980-82.

9

Édouard Mendy's nine clean sheets for Chelsea in the UEFA Champions League this season is the most ever by a goalkeeper in their debut campaign in the competition.

1

Pep Guardiola has lost his first cup final as Manchester City manager, with this loss only the second major cup final defeat of his managerial career (after the Copa del Rey in 2010-11).

3

Tuchel is just the second manager to record three consecutive wins in all competitions against Pep Guardiola, after Klopp did so in 2018 with Liverpool.

I tried the best selection to win the game. We tried to have speed on the ball, to find players between the lines on the ball and this was the decision.

Pep Guardiola, Manchester City manager

6

Chelsea have lifted the trophy in six of their seven major European finals in their history — with this their fourth European success in the Roman Abramovich era alone.

TUCHEL-SEA MASTERCLASS

Havertz's first-half strike helps Blues overcome Guardiola's City in Champions League final

Chelsea defeated Manchester City 1-0 in the final at the Dragao stadium in Porto to lift their second Champions League title on Saturday | AFP

Of course now is the time to celebrate for some days, to enjoy and let it sink in, for one or two weeks, to talk about it and reflect on it, but then it does surprisingly not a lot to you. I think it's good because nobody wants to rest. I want the next one, the next title. I want to be a part of it and I demand to be a part of it and this is what comes next

— Thomas Tuchel, Chelsea manager

WHERE CITY GOT IT WRONG

GUARDIOLA GETS IT WRONG WITH XI

The Spaniard has been accused of overthinking his tactics and line-up in the big games in Europe. Here, the decision to play without a defensive midfielder backfired as Chelsea overrun them in midfield. Only for the second time this season, City played without Fernandinho or Rodri as the more attack minded Ilkay Gundogan took up that role. City were caught on the counter multiple times which is how Kai Havertz scored the winning goal.

PLAYING OUT OF FORM PLAYERS

The decision to start with Raheem Sterling and Bernardo Silva also raised eyebrows as both have been out of form in recent times. Sterling could not get the better of Reece James all night while Bernardo was an anonymous figure with both not finishing the game. After the likes of Sergio Aguero and Gabriel Jesus came on, City looked a lot likelier to score.

KEY PLAYERS PLAYED OUT OF POSITION

When you have players like Kevin De Bruyne and Phil Foden, you expect them to unlock any defence. But playing them out of position is a different story. De Bruyne struggled in the false nine position instead of his favoured midfield role. Foden has been brilliant on the left but he also ended up playing out of position to accomodate Sterling.

WHAT CHELSEA GOT RIGHT

KEEPING IT SIMPLE & ORGANISED AT THE BACK

It is no fluke that Chelsea beat City thrice (including the final) in their last three meetings. They keep it tight at the back, had a good mix of experience and youth, and relied on hitting on the break against a team who can keep the ball better. Despite losing Thiago Silva in the first half, Andreas Christensen slotted brilliantly in his place which showed their collective mentality. Tuchel also trusted the likes of Timo Werner and Kai Havertz.

KANTE RUNS THE SHOW

The legend of N'Golo Kante continues to grow. The final belonged to this diminutive dynamite who didn't let the likes of De Bruyne and Foden any space or time on the ball. Was disrupting City's passing rhythm and even joined in when Chelsea were looking to counter. Was a livewire throughout the night and screened the Chelsea backline brilliantly. Adjudged Man of the Match.

RESPONDING TUCHEL OF DUTY

Thomas Tuchel deserves a lot of credit for turning around Chelsea's season. After taking over from Frank Lampard in January, he instilled belief in the players. He transformed the likes of Antonio Rudiger and gave them a winning mentality. The club reached the FA Cup final, finished fourth in the league and then went on to beat a strong City side.

AFP @ Porto

CHELSEA won the Champions League for the second time as a Kai Havertz goal secured a tense 1-0 victory over Manchester City in Saturday's final in Porto, shattering Pep Guardiola's dream of lifting the trophy for the third time.

Havertz rounded Ederson to score three minutes before half-time at the Estadio do Dragao and the Chelsea players ran to celebrate with the German.

Coach Thomas Tuchel, full of energy on the touchline just like his opposite number, punched the air in celebration, and later jumped with joy on the pitch after Chelsea held on for victory in the second half after City lost distraught skipper Kevin De Bruyne to injury.

Cheslea finished fourth in the Premier League, 19 points behind champions City, but this, remarkably, was their third win over Guardiola's side in the last six weeks.

LOCAL EXPRESS

BFC announce Dimas, Khabra departure

BENGALURU: Bengaluru FC announced the departure of Dimas Delgado and Harmanjot Khabra on Sunday. The Spanish midfielder played 67 ISL games while the defender represented in 68. They also featured in other competitions. The duo also won the ISL tilte in 2018-19 season.

Silva bags treble as BFC announce annual awards

BENGALURU: Cleiton Silva claimed three titles as Bengaluru FC announced winners of their Annual Awards for 2020-21 season. The Brazilian, whose performances earned him the top-scorer accolade alongside Sunil Chhetri, was also named the Players' Player of the Season and his strike against SC East Bengal claimed the goal of the season award. Midfielder Suresh Wangjam was named the JSW Fans' player of the season while Damaitphang Lyngdoh claimed the upcoming player of the season award.

Fouaad seals Olympic spot by achieving MER

FIROZ MIRZA @ Chennai

INDIA'S Fouaad Mirza confirmed his spot in the Tokyo Olympics by completing Minimum Eligibility Requirements (MERs) and finishing second and third on his horses Seigneur Medicott and Dajara 4 respectively in the CCI44*-Long eventing competition in Boborowko, Poland.

Backed by the Embassy International Riding School, the 29-year-old battled lockdown, outbreak of Equine Herpes Virus (EHV-1), cancellation of events and an injury to his favourite horse Seigneur Medicott to attain the MER.

The double Asian Games medallist had earned an Olympic quota for the country last year and the recent performance in Poland helped him seal the deal. He will be the third from the country to compete in the equestrian events in the Olympics. Imtiaz Anees (2000, Sydney) and late Wing Commander IJ Lamba (1996, Atlanta) are the other Indians to have represented the country in the sport at the Games.

"He was trying to attain the MER on two horses. Fortunately, Seigneur Medicott, who got injured in 2019, recovered last year," Fouaad's father, Dr Hasneyn Mirza, a well-known veterinarian, told this daily. Dr Hasneyn admitted Fouaad was finding it difficult to find events to achieve the MER because of the existing situation due to Covid-19 pandemic. "Achieving MER wasn't very difficult but the real problem was finding events. Covid led to cancellation of events and then there was outbreak of EHV-1. This was the last possible event because by June 21, you have to give your qualifying results," he added.

EARLY EXIT

Thiem squanders two-set lead to bow out in opener

AFP @ Paris

FOURTH seed Dominic Thiem blew a two-set lead to be dumped out of the French Open in the first round by Spanish veteran Pablo Andujar on Sunday.

The 35-year-old Andujar staged a remarkable comeback to defeat the two-time Roland Garros runner-up 4-6, 5-7, 6-3, 6-4, 6-4 after almost four-and-a-half hours on Court Philippe Chatrier. It is the first time in his 17-year career that Andujar has come from two sets behind to win. "It's a very special moment because I'm 35 and I don't know how long I'm going to play," said Andujar. "I had to believe to be able to get this result. It was very difficult, in the third set he wasn't quite as strong."

It is Thiem's first opening-round exit at Roland Garros and the first time he has failed to reach at least the quarter-finals of the tournament since 2015.

The Austrian lost both the 2018 and 2019 finals to 13-time champion Rafael Nadal, but did win his maiden Grand Slam title last year at the US Open.

His form had been patchy this season, though, having lost to Lorenzo Sonego in Rome and Cameron Norrie in Lyon over the past two weeks. Andujar, the world No. 68, had not beaten a top-10 player since 2015 until a win over Roger Federer in Geneva last week.

Osaka faces expulsion

Japanese superstar Naomi Osaka was threatened with disqualification from the French Open if she persists with her controversial media boycott, officials said. Osaka, a four-time Grand Slam title winner and sport's highest-earning female athlete, was fined for refusing to hold a press conference after her 6-4, 7-6 (7/4) win over Romanian Patricia Maria Tig. Osaka believes traditional post-match inquests are akin to "kicking people when they're down." Osaka agreed only to a cursory on-court TV interview.

SELECT RESULTS: Men (1st rd): Roberto Bautista Agut (ESP x11) bt Mario Vilella Martinez (ESP) 6-4, 6-4, 6-2; Pablo Andujar (ESP) bt Dominic Thiem (AUT x4) 4-6, 5-7, 6-3, 6-4, 6-4; Pablo Carreno Busta (ESP x12) bt Norbert Gombos (SVK) 6-3, 6-4, 6-3. **Women (1st rd):** Anhelina Kalinina (UKR) bt Angelique Kerber (GER x26) 6-2, 6-4; Petra Kvitova (CZE x11) bt Greet Minnen (BEL) 6-7 (3/7), 7-6 (7/5), 6-1; Naomi Osaka (JPN x2) bt Patricia Maria Tig (ROM) 6-4, 7-6 (7/4).

भारत सरकार / GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
परमाणु ऊर्जा विभाग / DEPARTMENT OF ATOMIC ENERGY
नाभिकीय ईंधन सम्मिश्र / NUCLEAR FUEL COMPLEX
ईसीआईएल डाक, हैदराबाद -500062
ECIL POST, HYDERABAD– 500 062

निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना/NOTICE INVITING TENDER

भारत के राष्ट्रपति की ओर से, वरि. प्रबंधक (नलिका तैयारी एवं परियोजनाएं) द्वारा दिनांक 23.06.2021, 1400 बजे तक निम्नलिखित कार्यों हेतु बंद लिफाफे में निविदाएँ आमंत्रित की जाती हैं। On behalf of the President of India, Senior Manager (Tube Preparation & Projects) invites sealed tenders up to 14:00 hrs of 23.06.2021 on the following works

एनआईटी संख्या NIT NO.	:	NFC/TP (55) /Contract/2020-21/02
कार्य का नाम Name of the Work	:	Assistance in Material Handling & Zr-Scrap Handling works at Tube Preparation located at NUFAP
अनुमानित लागत Estimated Cost	:	Rs 42,18,847/- (Rupees Forty Two Lakhs Eighteen Thousand Eight Hundred and Forty Seven only)
ठेके की अवधि Period of contract	:	12 Months (300 days)
निविदा दस्तावेजों के विक्रय Sale of tender documents	:	From 02.06.2021 to 16.06.2021 between 10:00 hrs to 15:00 Hrs

निविदा प्रपत्र और अन्य विवरण रुपए 500/– का डिमांड ड्राफ्ट/एफडीआर/बैंकर्स चेक के रूप में भुगतान एवं लेखा अधिकारी, नाईस के पक्ष में आहरित कर भुगतान करने पर प्राप्त किया जा सकता है।
Tender forms and other details can be obtained from Sr. Manager (Tube Preparation & Projects) on payment of Rs. 500/- in the form of DD/FDR/BC drawn in favor of PAO, NFC.
अधिक विवरण/सूचना के लिए For more details/information, visit the website: www.nfc.gov.in की वेबसाइट पर जाएं।

हस्ता. Sd/-

KARNATAKA FOREST DEPARTMENT
Office of the Deputy Conservator of Forest,
Bangalore Urban Division, Aranya Bhavan Annex,18th Cross, Malleshwaram, Bengaluru - 560003. Tel/Fax: 080-23343464, E-mail: dcfurban82@yahoo.co.in

No: A2/BUD/CR-27/2021-22 Date: 25-05-2021

E-TENDER NOTICE
(Through E-Procurement Portal Only)

Tender is invited through e-Procurement Portal: **http://eproc.karnataka.gov.in** of Government of Karnataka only by the registered & Eligible Contractors of Bangalore Urban Division and Public Works Department for undertaking **various works at Kadugodi Mini Tree Park of K.R. Pura Range, Turahalli Tree Park of Kaggalipura Range and Machohalli Tree Park of Bengaluru Range of Bengaluru Urban Division during the year 2021-22.**

1) Last date for submission of Technical and Financial Bids in e-Portal is **upto 5.00 PM on 24-06-2021. 2)** Date of Opening of Technical Bid is at **5.00 PM on 25-06-2021. 3)** If conditions contained in technical bid are satisfied, Financial Bid of such tenderers will be opened at **5.00 PM on 26-06-2021. 4)** Particulars of each work may be obtained at e-Governance Centre of Karnataka Government or Website: **www.eproc.karnataka.gov.in** and Further details can be obtained by this office during working hours.

Sd/- Deputy Conservator of Forest
Bangalore Urban Division, Bengaluru.

DIPR/DDU/Adverto/435/2021-22

COVID-19. DO NOT PANIC, BE AWARE
Wear Mask | 6 Feet Follow Physical Distancing | Maintain Hand Hygiene

BANGALORE DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
T. Chowdaiah Road, Kumara Park West, Bengaluru- 560 020

No. BDA/TPM/CLU-09/229/2021-22 Date: 29.05.2021

PUBLIC NOTICE

[Under Section 14(A) of Karnataka Town and Country Planning Act, 1961 (KTCP)]

Sri. B.V Gopala Reddy and others, Dommasandra Village, Sarjapura Hobli, Anekal Taluk, Bengaluru has requested for change of land use for Residential purpose in Sy No. 148/5(P), 149/1(P), 150/(P), 151/1, 152/1(P), 239/(P) & 240/1, of Dommasandra Village, Sarjapura Hobli, Anekal Taluk, Bengaluru District to an extent of 43604.51 Sq.mts (10 Acres 31 guntas, including 0-02 guntas "A" Karab) reserved for Agriculture Zone in Revised Master Plan-2015 of Bangalore. The Applicant has stated that by giving change of land use from Agriculture to Residential use, will be helpful for purchase of Residential units for middle and poor people and it will facilitate generation of employment and taxes to the Government.

As required under section 14(A) of Karnataka Town and Country Planning Act 1961, any person/persons affected by this proposal may file his/her/their objections if any / in writing to the Town Planner Member, BDA, Bangalore **within 15 days** from the date of publication. The objections / suggestions received after the expiry of 15 days will not be considered.

Sd/- Town Planner Member, BDA, Bengaluru
BDA/PRO/CLU/08/2020-21

BANGALORE DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
T. Chowdaiah Road, Kumara Park West, Bengaluru- 560 020

No. BDA/TPM/CLU-06/226/2021-22 Date: 29.05.2021

PUBLIC NOTICE

[Under Section 14(A) of Karnataka Town and Country Planning Act, 1961 (KTCP)]

Sri. B.V Somashekar Reddy, Sri. B.V Rajashekar Reddy and others, Dommasandra Village, Sarjapura Hobli, Anekal Taluk, Bengaluru has requested for change of land use for Commercial purpose in Sy No. 248, 249 and 250 of Dommasandra Village, Sarjapura Hobli, Anekal Taluk, Bengaluru District to an extent of 93,076.92 Sq.mts (23-00 Acres, including 0-05 guntas "A" Karab) reserved for Agriculture Zone in Revised Master Plan-2015 of Bangalore. The Applicant has stated that by giving change of land use from Agriculture to Commercial use, will be helpful for to generate employment of local educated youths and same time during constructions generate employment to the local labours. And gerenate tax to the Government.

As required under section 14(A) of Karnataka Town and Country Planning Act 1961, any person/persons affected by this proposal may file his/her/their objections if any / in writing to the Town Planner Member, BDA, Bangalore **within 15 days** from the date of publication. The objections / suggestions received after the expiry of 15 days will not be considered.

Sd/- Town Planner Member, BDA, Bengaluru
BDA/PRO/CLU/11/2020-21

BHARATIYA RESERVE BANK NOTE MUDRAN (P) LIMITED
(Wholly owned subsidiary of Reserve Bank of India)
P.O.: RBNML, Salboni - 721132, Paschim Medinipur, West Bengal.
Phone No.: 03227-280176 / 280317; Fax No.:03227-280744 / 280222

OPEN TENDER ENQUIRY (OTE)/NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING (NCB)

Tenders under Two Part bidding system are invited from experienced, resourceful, reputed and bonafide Suppliers/ServiceProviders/Agencies/Contractors (as applicable) for the following:-

1. **SUPPLY, INSTALLATION, COMMISSIONING, TRAINING AND PERFORMANCE TESTING OF PLATE POLISHING MACHINE AT BRBNMPL, SALBONI, TENDER NO. 002/SAL/PUR/2021-22. LAST DATE OF SUBMISSION OF ABOVE TENDER IS 16.07.2021 BY 11:30 HRS.**
2. **SUPPLY OF SULPHONATED CASTOR OIL (SCO) AT BRBNMPL, SALBONI, TENDER No. 003/SAL/PUR/2021-22. LAST DATE OF SUBMISSION OF ABOVE TENDER IS 02.07.2021 BY 11:30 HRS.**

For downloading tender documents and other details, kindly visit our website **www.brbnmpl.co.in**. Further extension or amendment/s, if any will be uploaded on our website only.

General Manager

KARNATAKA POWER TRANSMISSION CORPORATION LIMITED
CIN: U40109KA1999SGC025521

TENDER NOTIFICATION
(e-Procurement Mode only)

I) No.SEE/EE/Tr/W&M/DVG/AEE-2/F-114/21-22/Cys-21 Date : 29.05.2021

KPTCL, E-Tenders are invited in the prescribed format for the following work pertaining to Transmission (W&M) Circle, KPTCL, Davanagere from only those Agencies empanelled with KPTCL, for conducting Detailed Surveying of Transmission Line using Modern Survey Technique.

Bid Enquiry No.: KPTCL/SEE/Tr(W&M)/DVG/EE(O)/AEE-1/21-22/869, Dated. 10.05.2021 For conducting Detailed Survey using modern survey techniques for the project of Recondition / Strengthening of SC Line on SC Towers to SC Line on DC Towers of 220kV Davanagere-Guttur-Chitradurga Line from 220kV SRS Davangere Station to 220kV Chitradurga Station (upto Loc No:243) in the existing corridor for a distance of 85 Kms in Davanagere / Chitradurga District.

II) No.SEE/EE/Tr/W&M/DVG/F-Tender File/21-22/Cys-22 Date : 29.05.2021

E-Tenders are invited in the prescribed form from Reputed Manpower Agency for the following work.

Bid Enquiry No.: KPTCL/SEE/Tr(W&M)/DVG/EE(O)/AEE-1/21-22/871, Dated. 20.05.2021 For Hiring of Tempo Traveler 1No for day to day maintenance works & break down works required to TLM Sub-Division, KPTCL, Davanagere in the jurisdiction of Transmission (W&M) Circle, Davanagere through Outsource Agency for carrying both men and materials as and when required.

Tenders will be accepted through **e-Procurement Mode** only. For further details, prospective Bidders are advised to log on to website **https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in** or **https://kptcl.karnataka.gov.in** & Click on the Hyperlink **'e-Procurement-kptcl'** to participate in e-Procurement **on or after 31.05.2021.** Further details can be had from the office of the undersigned.

Sd/- **Superintending Engineer (Ele),**
Transmission (W&M) Circle, KPTCL, Near Stadium, Hadadi Road, Davanagere. Phone: 08192-250774

The coronavirus-induced lockdown made people 40 per cent less active, and tripled the potential risk for depression, finds a large study led by researchers at Goethe University, Frankfurt. The significant decrease in physical activity levels and well-being can spur a hidden "pandemic within the pandemic", warned 20 scientists from 14 countries.

Report claims coronavirus was created in China lab

Debates are raging about 'gain of function' research done in Wuhan; new study says virus has fingerprints that suggest lab manipulation

The Wuhan Institute of Virology belongs to the most secure category of labs | AFP

SCIENCE

BEIJING: Two scientists have claimed that Chinese scientists created the coronavirus in a Wuhan Lab and then tried to cover their tracks by making it look like the virus evolved naturally from bats.

The DailyMail reported that the scientists, British Professor Angus Dalgleish and Norwegian scientist Dr. Birger Sørensen, are set to published their paper in Quarterly Review of Biophysics Discovery in the coming days.

The researchers reportedly have had "prima facie evidence of retro-engineering" of the virus for a year, but were ignored by major journals.

The debate over the origins of the coronavirus has gained steam in recent days, though no new evidence has emerged on the subject.

The explosive study reported by DailyMail says the scientists discovered "unique fingerprints" in that virus that they say could have come only after manipulation in a lab. They conclude that virus has "no credible natural ancestor".

Gain of function

These claims may push the debate further towards scrutiny of what is known as gain of function research, which is what Dalgleish and Sørensen say led to the engineering of the virus. GOF entails modifying pathogens to make them more transmissible, deadlier, or better able to evade treatment and vaccines -- all to learn how to fight them better.

This field has long been contentious. Debate reached a fever pitch when two research teams in 2011 showed they could make bird flu transmissible between mammals.

Harvard epidemiologist Marc Lipsitch told AFP he was concerned "that it would create a strain of virus that if it infected a laboratory worker could not just kill that laboratory worker... but also cause a pandemic."

"The research is not required and does not contribute to the development of drugs or vaccines," added molecular biologist Richard Ebright of Rutgers University, one of the staunchest opponents of this kind of research.

In 2014 the US government announced a pause in federal funding for such work, which gave way in 2017 to a framework that would consider each application on a case-by-case basis. But the process has been criticized as lacking transparency and credibility.

As late as last year, a nonprofit received funding from the US on research to "predict spillover potential" of bat coronavirus to humans in Wuhan.

Questioned by Congress this week, Francis Collins and Anthony Fauci of the National Institutes of Health denied this amounted to gain of function research, but Ebright said it clearly does.

None of this means that Covid-19 definitely leaked from a lab -- in fact there is no hard scientific evidence in favuor of natural origin or lab accident scenario, said Ebright.

But there are certain lines of circumstantial evidence in favor of the latter. For instance, Wuhan is around 1,000 miles north of bat caves that harbor the ancestor virus, well out of the animals' flight range.

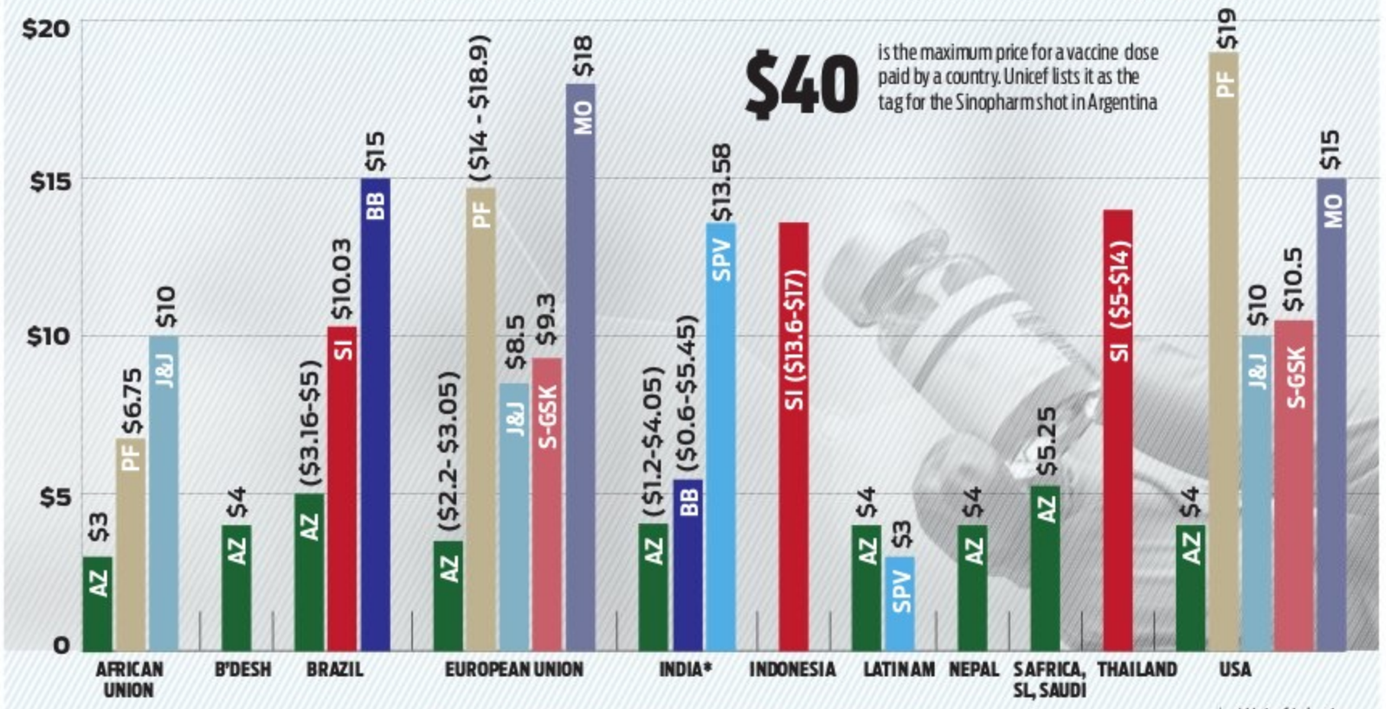
Scientists from Wuhan were however known to be carrying out routine trips to those caves to take samples.

Alina Chan, a molecular biologist from the Broad Institute, said there were no signs of risky pathogen research dying down in the wake of the pandemic -- in fact "it's possibly expanded."

EXFILE • DATA

PUTTING A PRICE ON VACCINES

The cost of a single coronavirus vaccine dose varies across countries as well as between different entities in a country. Based on the latest Unicef data, here's a comparison of prices in select nations/regional groups



$40 is the maximum price for a vaccine dose paid by a country. Unicef lists it as the tag for the Sinopharm shot in Argentina

READING THE CHART

Higher the bar, the more expensive the vaccine. The same vaccine could be sold at different prices in a same country, and in such cases the range is mentioned next to the name (for example, two vaccines in India are sold at different prices to central and state governments). Notably, AZ costs less in Europe than in India

ABBREVIATIONS

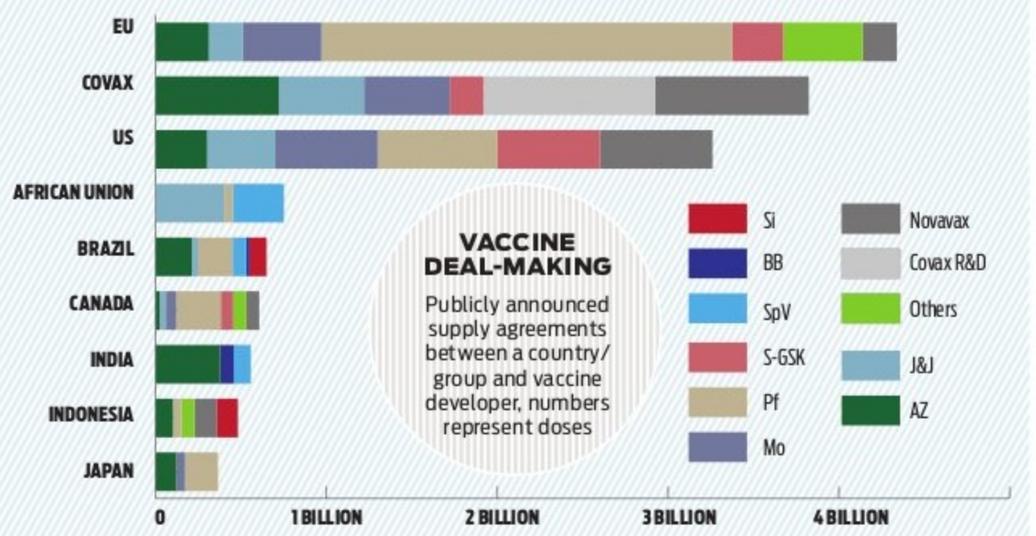
- AZ - AstraZeneca/Oxford, or Covishield
- BB - Bharat Biotech
- Pf - Pfizer/BioNTech
- Mo - Moderna
- J&J - Johnson & Johnson
- Si - Sinovac
- SpV - Sputnik V
- S-GSK - Sanofi-GSK

*Unicef is basing the low central govt price for India on data put out by Anurag Thakur (MoS Finance) on May 9

17 vaccines approved for use by at least one nation, with 5 getting the WHO's nod

13.1 bn doses secured through deals, with 3.86 billion secured & optioned via Covax

76 mn doses shipped globally so far, which is only 0.6% of doses secured



VACCINE DEAL-MAKING

Publicly announced supply agreements between a country/group and vaccine developer, numbers represent doses

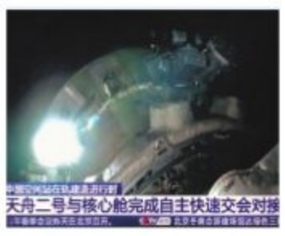
FACT OF THE MATTER

FDA nod for cancer drug

MEDICINE

US regulators have approved the first medicine for patients with the most common type of lung cancer whose tumors have a genetic mutation long considered untreatable with drugs. The Food and Drug Administration said it has approved Amgen's drug Lumakras to treat non-small cell lung cancer with the mutation in patients who have worsened after initial treatment with at least one other drug. This is the first targeted therapy for tumors with a so-called KRAS mutation. This type of mutation occurs in genes that help regulate cell growth and division. The mutation is involved in many cancer types.

China's space station



SPACE

A three-member crew of male astronauts will blast off next month for a three-month mission on China's new space station, according to a space official who was the country's first astronaut in orbit. The comments by Yang Liwei, the manned space program's deputy chief designer, to state television came as an automated spacecraft (pictured above) was launched with fuel and supplies for the Tianhe station. The Tianhe, or Heavenly Harmony, is the third and largest space station launched by China's increasingly ambitious space program. Its core module was launched into orbit April 29.

Air pollution doubles smell loss risk: Study

HEALTH

WASHINGTON: Long-term exposure to particulate matter (PM) 2.5 -- a mixture of solid particles and liquid droplets found in the air -- doubles the risk of losing smell, a hallmark of Covid-19, according to a new study.

The loss of smell, a condition known as anosmia, can severely impact a person's quality of life, making it extremely difficult to taste foods, detect airborne hazards in the environment, and carry out other functions dependent on the senses.

Covid-19 has further thrust olfaction into the spotlight as olfactory disturbances appear to be both a cardinal symptom and, in some cases, a debilitating consequence of the ongoing global pandemic, said researchers from the Johns Hopkins University.

While previous research has associated PM2.5 as a likely culprit for anosmia, the team conducted a new study to better understand how long-term exposure to air pollution can rob someone of the ability to smell and taste.

They found long-term airborne exposure to PM2.5 increases the risk of losing one's smell by nearly twice (a 1.6- to 1.7-fold increase).

This may occur because the location of the olfactory nerve, which contains the sensory nerve fibres relating to the sense of smell, places it directly in the path of inhaled PM2.5 materials. The findings appeared in the *JAMA Network Open*.

PANDEMIC DESPERATION

Egypt hopes new discoveries will boost tourism

ARCHAEOLOGY

WORKERS dig and ferry wheelbarrows laden with sand to open a new shaft at a bustling archaeological site outside of Cairo, while a handful of Egyptian archaeologists supervise from garden chairs. The dig is at the foot of the Step Pyramid of Djoser, arguably the world's oldest pyramid, and is one of many recent excavations that are yielding troves of ancient artifacts from the country's largest archaeological site.

As some European countries reopen to international tourists, Egypt has already been trying for months to attract them to its archaeological sites and museums. Officials are betting that the new ancient discoveries will set it apart on the mid- and post-pandemic tourism market. They need visitors to come back in force to inject cash into the tourism industry, a pillar of the economy.

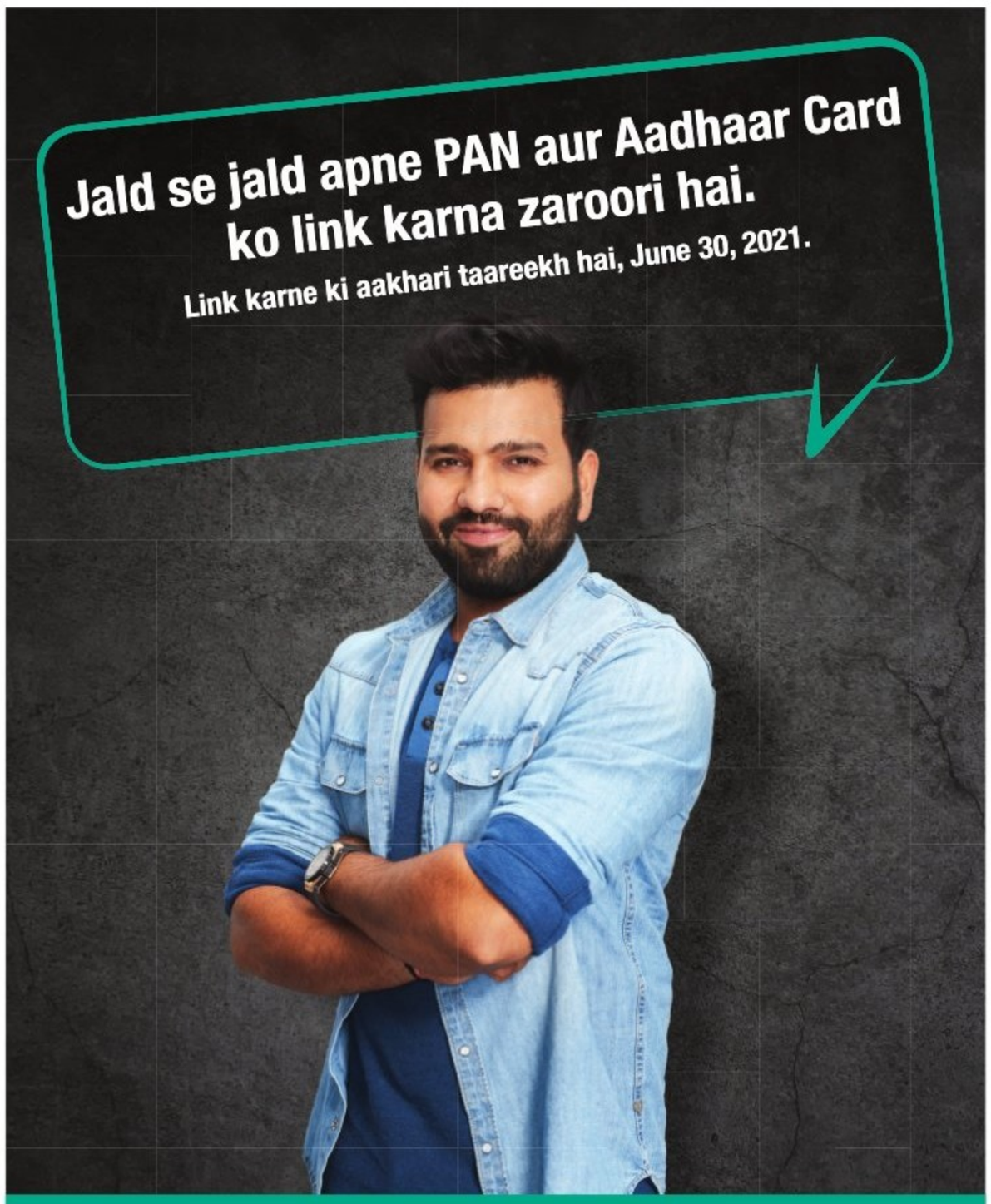
But like countries elsewhere, Egypt continues to battle the coronavirus, and is struggling to get its people vaccinated. The country has, up until now, received only 5 million vaccines for its population of 100 million people, according to its Health Ministry. In early May, the government announced that 1 million people had been vaccinated, though that number is believed to be higher now.

In the meantime, authorities have kept the publicity machine running, focused on the new discoveries.

In November, archaeologists announced the discovery of at least 100 ancient coffins dating back to the Pharaonic Late Period and Greco-Ptolemaic era, along with 40 gilded statues found 2,500 years after they were first buried. That came a month after the discovery of 57 other coffins at the same site, the necropolis of Saqqara that includes the step pyramid.

"Saqqara is a treasure," said Tourism and Antiquities Minister Khaled el-Anany while announcing the November discovery, estimating that only 1% of what the site contains has been unearthed so far.

"Our problem now is that we don't know how we can possibly wow the world after this," he said.


Jald se jald apne PAN aur Aadhaar Card ko link karna zaroori hai.
Link karne ki aakhari taareekh hai, June 30, 2021.
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31•05•2021
MONDAY

DAY'S DIARY

Breaking record

Jamaica's Usain Bolt set a world record in the 100 metres on May 31, 2008 by clocking 9.72 seconds at the Reebok Grand Prix meeting at Icahn Stadium

THE NEW RECORD

The event was a Grand Prix status meeting as part of the 25 fixture IAAF World Athletics Tour 2008. Bolt set the record surpassing Asafa Powell's 9.74 from Rieti in September 2007

HISTORIC WINS

After this, he rewrote history and became one of the biggest sports stars. Later, he won the Olympic Games in Beijing, London and Rio

SIGNATURE MOVES

While collecting his massive array of golds, Bolt made his signature 'Shh' gesture and 'Lightning Bolt' celebration pose a familiar sight at arenas

Sandalwood showman Ravichandran turns 60

PG 4

Bengaluru's manga fans share their sadness on hearing the news of Berserk creator Kentaro Miura's passing

Miura in memoriam

Arvind Menon dressed up as Guts

Miura was a perfectionist and you could see it in the detailing in his comic panels. It's one of the reasons his work is so highly revered and fans didn't mind waiting ages for chapters

Arvind Menon, artist

MIURA CREATED BERSERK IN 1989

The manga series has **40 volumes** and belongs to the dark fantasy genre

Plot: Guts, a lone mercenary, fights other-worldly beings seeking to devour him while he defies his destiny. He does this to save his love, Casca and to exact revenge on Griffith, a former friend and commander of the Band of the Hawk

SIMRAN AHUJA

THERE'S nothing worse for a fan than not knowing how a story he or she has been following for years ends. Japanese manga artist Kentaro Miura (54), who created the *Berserk* series, died earlier this month, leaving fans worldwide mourning the loss of a loved author who left his most famous series unfinished.

Bengaluru-based developer Kishore Rajendra co-organised a viewing party of the first *Berserk* film when he heard of Miura's death. "The story had been playing out for 30-odd years and the last chapter, which came out in April, ended at a pivotal point," he says.

Miura was known for taking long hiatuses, and his fans patiently waited for each twist in the story. As one fan explained, *One Piece* – another popular manga – came out with one chapter a week while Miura brought out 2-5 chapters a year. But to his fans, the wait was worth it.

"He was a perfectionist and you could see it in the detailing in his comic panels. It's one of the reasons his work is so highly revered and fans didn't mind waiting ages for chapters," says Arvind Menon, a Chennai-based artist, who is a frequent participant in Bengaluru's Comic Con events.

Rajendra adds, "Miura was an art history student. So his art was detailed and carried references to many famous artists."

Menon won a prize in the anime category for his cosplay on Berserk's main character Guts in 2019. The 28-year-old took Miura's death hard, and took some days off of work. "I spent at least 60 hours listening to the Berserk soundtrack," he says, explaining that the protagonist Guts' perseverance helped him gain emotional strength.

While manga fans are spoilt for choice, those who follow Berserk tend to be loyalists. "If you had a room of 100 fans, maybe 10-20 would like this series. But that's not to say others haven't heard of Miura. His influence is everywhere... like the character design of Dark Souls video games and the Netflix animated series Castlevania," explains Rajendra.

Fans are still coming to terms with Miura's death and his unfinished series. "Reading Miura's trail notes in hindsight reveals the pain this work inflicted on him. He had been working on this one story since he was in his early 20s. He never intended for the series to go on as long as it did but there was a lot of pressure to live up to, from both publishers as well as the audience," says Tarun Prabhu, who has followed *Berserk* since 2006.

Besides reading it in English, the banking professional also started re-reading it in Japanese some years ago. "The story as well as art quality grew up with Miura, he outdid himself with every chapter. We can take solace in the fact that in its current form, a lot of loose ends have been tied up and the main characters had achieved a form of peace," he adds.

International snooker champion Pankaj Advani tells *CE* he believes in amplifying information on Covid resources, and looking after the vulnerable people in his life

I don't have a campaign of my own but I have been approached by people who are doing a lot of work. I am just spreading the word as much as possible

Pankaj Advani, international snooker champion

Lending a voice

MONIKA MONALISA

IN this digital day and age, if you are someone with a massive following, sometimes the biggest help you can give, is to lend the reach of your voice to spread a message. And that's what snooker player **Pankaj Advani** is doing.

Associated with many initiatives like Find A Bed, which provides people information about bed availability, and Med Friends, a group which gives medicines to Covid patients who can't afford them, Advani is using his social media reach to disseminate information on Covid resources.

Speaking to *CE*, Advani starts by saying, "I am no Sonu Sood, let me be honest with you. I don't have a campaign of my own but I have been approached by people who are doing a lot of work. I am just spreading the word as much as possible. Take for example, Find A Bed, which is a great cause."

Apart from him, celebrities like Karan Johar, Masaba Gupta, and ace tennis player Sania Mirza are part of the campaign which was started by India's International Movement Of United Nations.

Advani also posted about Med Friends, an initiative started by fellow snooker player and friend Brijesh Damani. "He started it with his team. They collect unused medicines from people who recovered from Covid and give them to the underprivileged," says Advani. The group is active in several cities including Hyderabad, Chennai, New Delhi, etc.

Advani, who is based in Bengaluru, says he wants to do more but is worried he will put his mother – aged 67 – at risk if he goes out to do volunteer. "There is a lot I want to do, but with an elderly person at home it's not the wisest idea," says Advani, who tested Covid positive in December 2020, a few weeks before his wedding.

ALL HANDS ON DECK

With no tournaments scheduled, the sportsperson in him misses the thrill of it but tries to keep a positive approach even during this unprecedented time.

Ask him what keeps him going, and he says, "Hope. I think this is the ultimate test for humanity. When times are good, people take many things for granted. With a little bit of gratitude, we can spread more hope and positivity and that starts by helping each other out."

Last year he donated to the PM Cares fund, but this year he decided to help people who are closer home. "We tried to help the people who work for us as much as possible. For example, the domestic workers, watchman of our building etc... by taking care of their medical bills because they are not in the best financial state because of lack of work during the lockdown," says the Padma Bhushan and Arjuna awardee.

Monika Manchanda, a city-based food writer and consultant, co-founder and chief culinary officer at LiveAltLife, dishes out fun food-related trivia in this weekly series. So, answer these three questions and find out how much of a foodie you are.

GRUB HUB

THE QUIZ WILL BE PUBLISHED EVERY SATURDAY

Send answers to **bengalurucityexpress@gmail.com** with the subject line **'Food quiz'**

The correct answers and names of the first three respondents are published here. Prize: The first prize winner this week will win a complimentary voucher (worth ₹1,500) on delivery from Mad Mex.**

THE RIGHT ANSWERS

1. Gautam Krishnakutty; 2. Taaza Thindi; 3. Nippattu

FIRST THREE TO GET IT RIGHT

1. V P Prathap
2. Apoorva Jain
3. Suresh B N

**Conditions apply

VS AND VS

When author and historian Vikram Sampath celebrated his birthday recently, it was extra special after having battled it in hospital for three "harrowing" weeks. Meanwhile, Sampath, who is ready with the second part of his book titled *Savarkar: A Contested Legacy*, and had planned to release it on May 28- the birth anniversary of Veer Savarkar -- took to social media to announce that the release has been pushed to July owing to the pandemic and his illness.

CITY READ

Godrej donates vaccine refrigerator

Godrej Appliances has donated a specialized 99-litre vaccine refrigerator to an Urban Primary Health Centre in the West Zone of Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike limits. A representative of Godrej & Boyce Mfg Co. Ltd handed over the refrigerator to Dr Sujatha S Hiremath, Medical Officer of the Primary Health Centre in a formal ceremony. The donation is part of the company's COVID Outreach initiative, through which it is donating 40 units of medical refrigerators to various hospitals and public health centres across India, according to a release.

Art historian Benoy Behl releases his digitised restoration of paintings in the caves of Ajanta and Badami

From darkness unto light

SANATH PRASAD

53,000 photographs of Asian monuments, artistic heritage

145 documentaries on Asian art

Many of India's artistic and archaeological marvels have been lost to time and neglect, but attempts are under way to rescue them from the clutches of disfigurement. The work of people like art historian **Benoy Krishen Behl** shows that cultural informatics can help with art restoration and provide wider access to some kinds of art.

On May 28, during an online event hosted by Sapio Analytics, Behl took participants on a virtual tour of six paintings that he has digitally restored. Three of the paintings he worked on were from the Ajanta caves in Maharashtra, one from the Badami caves in north Karnataka, and two from the Brihadeeshwara Temple in Tanjavur.

"It took me 19 years to complete the restoration of many ancient paintings in the country including some from the caves of Ajanta and Badami. I have carefully restored them with an intimate understanding of the painting. Bad restoration is much more harmful than just leaving the art to crumble," he says.

Behl says that he digitally restored the paintings in the caves based on photographs of the paintings he took in 1991, 1992 and 2001 (Badami). "These paintings were not visible to the world as they are in dark caves and the Archaeological Survey of India does not allow the use of flashes to photograph these paintings because it would affect the art," he says.

He says that he managed to photograph them in conditions of low light nonetheless, and worked on those images to arrive at re-creations of what the paintings may have looked like when they were created hundreds of years ago. While the paintings in the Ajanta caves are 2,000 years old, the ones in Badami were done in the 6th century CE.

When Behl visited the four caves in Badami in 2001, most of the paintings, including those of Vishnu and Brahma were damaged. However, a painting he restored, titled Queen and Attendants (see pictures), was exhibited during the session earlier this week.

One of the images released during the online event features King Mahajanak from depicting how he renounced his kingly life to become as ascetic.

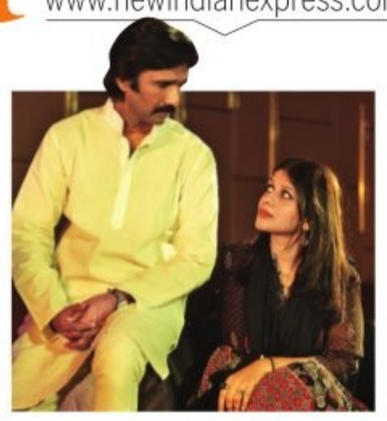
"Thousands of figures in the Ajanta caves contain a vision of life that was full of care, compassion and warmth," says Behl who has photographed several Asian monuments and even made documentaries on them.

Mumbai-based Sapio Analytics will exhibit some of Behl's photographs and their digital restoration at The Nehru Centre in London in 2022 to mark 75 years of India's independence.

WHAT WHEN WHY WHERE

TALENT HUNT

LITKids open mic is coming up with a new season for school kids. Participants can showcase their talents in singing, instrumentals, storytelling and other forms of entertainment. **When:** May 31 **Details:** bookmyshow.com



PLAY TIME

Qadir Ali Baig Theatre Foundation is streaming their play *Alone*. Set in the recent lockdown, the story is about yesteryear movie star Asha, who looks back at her unusual journey. The play is produced by Begum Razia Baig and directed by Mohammad Ali Baig. **When:** June 3 **Tickets:** bookmyshow.com

SHOW TIME

Watch *Cross Connection*, a story of two strangers, connected through a wrong number. One, a thief planning a bank heist, and another, a migrant labourer in desperate need of funds. With more twists and turns, this film can get you on the edge of your seat **When:** June 12 onwards **Tickets:** bookmyshow.com

FOLK MUSIC

Folk artistes from Jaisalmer are presenting *Rhythm of Desert*' a concert centred around soulful and authentic folk music.The virtual event is a fund-raiser to support folk artistes from the Langa, Manganiyar, Bhatt, Bhopa, Kalbeliya Rajasthani communities in the Jaisalmer region. **When:** June 5 **Tickets:** bookmyshow.com

ENJOY AN ONLINE COMEDY SHOW FEATURING THE TRIO- KARUNESH TALWAR, SIDDHARTH DUDEJA & DEVESH DIXIT. **WHEN:** TILL JUNE 5 **TICKETS:** BOOKMYSHOW

ABRACADABRA

Sign up for a live magic show featuring magician Karan Singh as he attempts to read your mind and deal with mentalism. Watch out, as he might also find out some personal details through his mind-reading skills **When:** June 4 **Details:** bookmyshow.com

GAME ON

Wake up the escape artiste in you to wade through the set of traps and obstacles ahead of you. Sign up for Haunted House- Online Escape Room, and enjoy getting rid of the odds lying ahead in the virtual game. **Details:** bookmyshow.com

Covid Care Meals

Gawky Goose-Kitchen and Bar has launched 'care meals' for those affected by COVID-19 and are quarantined or isolated at home without a helping hand to cook. The meal box will provide healthy and balanced meals like rice, chapati, curry and much more. **To place orders call:** 9901787273

LOL

Stand up comedian Sorabh Pant is performing a comedy show called *The Expert*. In this weekly news show, he will cover politics, world news, film, sports, local news and about pop culture. **When:** May 31 onwards **Tickets on:** bookmyshow.com

Acting Workshop

Flux Bengaluru is organising a theatre workshop for aspiring actors. The workshop introduces participants to the basic elements of theatre and master classes which will be focusing on components like mind, body and voice. **When:** June 5 onwards **Details:** bookmyshow.com Youtube

QUICK FIX

What's cooking

IN YOUR KITCHEN?
We are hungry for recipes with minimum ingredients and maximum flavours. Share your quick-fix with us, along with step-by-step photos, at cityexpresschn@gmail.com.

BLACK TIL BALL

INGREDIENTS

- **Black til:** 100 g ■ **Groundnut:** 50 g
- **Urad dal** (split with skin): 25 g ■ **Dates** (seedless): 20-25

METHOD

- Dry-roast til, urad dal and groundnut till it emanates aroma.
- Allow it to cool and remove the skin from groundnut.
- In a blender, powder them one after the other. Keep aside.
- Then blend the dates. Add it to the powder.
- Now, mix everything together and roll into balls.

— Akila Thiyagarajan, Bengaluru

FIT BIT

DEVADUUTA PANNA ASANA

(FALLEN ANGEL POSE)

In Sanskrit, 'devaduuta' means angel, 'panna' means fallen, and 'asana' means pose. It is an advanced variation of Parsva Bakasana, where the head is brought to the floor and the legs are lifted. It is an aesthetically pleasing pose that symbolises the embodiment of grace regardless of circumstance. It teaches that true grace, inner strength and lightness come from within, and are present despite any metaphorical 'fall' in one's life. The posture has mental and emotional benefits in that it calms and soothes the mind. It creates discipline and builds strength.

STEPS

- Warm-up the body with few a rounds of Surya Namaskar (Sun Salutation).
- Sit in Malasana Hand Forward (Garland Pose Hands Forward), relaxing for about four breaths.
- Raise the hips and come into Bakasana (Crane Pose), stretching the arms and balancing the torso on the elbows. Remain for four breaths.
- Release and rest back in Malasana Hands Forward. Move the torso towards the left and come to Parsva Bakasana (Side Crane Pose).
- Bend the elbows allowing the outer left knee to rest on the right outer elbow. Make sure both the knees and thighs are close to each other. The left outer elbow is placed close to the left rib cage.
- Inhale and lift the feet off the floor while taking the chest and the face forward in Parsva Bakasana. Adjust the legs and the thighs if required.
- Inhale and slowly move the hips towards the centre, raise the right thigh away from the left thigh and stretch the right leg out straight taking it parallel to the floor.
- Now, your left cheek is on the floor, the left side of shoulder close to the floor, the left thigh resting on the left elbow, the right leg stretched out behind parallel to the floor.
- Stay here for two breaths. Inhale and stretch the right leg up to 90°.
- Ensure the left knee is flexed, left leg is close to the right thigh, and left foot is pointing upwards.
- To release, bring the legs down and lift the head up, sit in Vajrasana.
- Relax and repeat on the other side.

BENEFITS

- Helps calm the mind.
- Improves mental focus.
- Strengthens the wrists, arms and shoulders.
- Improves core strength.
- Improves the overall sense of balance.
- Increases flexibility.
- Massages the abdominal organs.

LIMITATIONS

- Anyone with high or low blood pressure, suffering from severe lower back, hip, shoulder or wrist injuries and during pregnancy, avoid this.
- Do it in the presence of a yoga teacher.

— by N Elumalai, PhD scholar (Yoga Science) at Meenakshi Academy of Higher Education & Research, Chennai

SOUND BOARD

LET'S READ A POEM

Bringing back the joy of literature in kids' lives, this podcast has picks classic poems that kids are going to love and enjoy. In each episode, a select poem is read, emphasising different words and phrases and also providing a brief summary of the lyrical ballad to help our young listeners understand its deeper meaning.
● On Gaana

ALICE IN WONDERLAND

The famous story is broken into twelve chapters and each chapter narrates an interesting take about the journey of the protagonist through this amazing place which is full of interesting animals, humans, places and objects.
● On Gaana

HEIRS OF THE PANDAVAS

A brother and a sister, a warrior monk and a ranger, born in the lineage of Shatanika, one of the sons of the mighty Pandavas. They are on a quest to erase a curse upon their family. Nothing about this adventure will be easy.
● On Gaana

PANCHATANTRA KI KAHANIYAN

The Panchatantra is an ancient Indian collection of interrelated animal fables arranged within a frame story.
● On Gaana

ESHWARI STORIES FOR KIDS IN TELUGU

A story telling podcast for kids, hosted by Eshwari, a grandmother, who is interested in narrating beautiful stories for kids.
● On Gaana

POPULAR ON YOUTUBE

RX SOORI

A young gangster becomes infamous for his criminal activities in Andhra Pradesh. But things change when he falls in love with his childhood friend.
● Cast: Duniya Vijay, Ravi Shankar, Adi Lokesh

MALLA

Shiva, a florist's son, grows up to become a gangster. After his father is murdered, he sets out to take revenge against the culprits.
● Cast: V Ravichandran, Priyanka Upendra, Umashree

KEMPEGOWDA

Kempe Gowda, an honest police officer and a people's man, takes on a gangster, Armugam. However, the mafia leader has close connections with the bureaucrats, which keeps him safe against the law.
● Cast: Kichcha Sudeep, Ravishankar, Ragini Dwivedi

ANTARAVIRALLI

Sanjay and Nitya fall in love with each other despite facing opposition from their peers. They soon become intimate and Nitya gets pregnant, which causes problems in their lives.
● Cast: Prakhyuth Parameshi, Achyuth Kumar, Chikkanna

Scan this QR code to find out how your favourite celebs are coping with the lockdown.

WHAT'S ON TED TALKS

1 A GLOBAL FOOD CRISIS MAY BE LESS THAN A DECADE AWAY BY SARA MENKER

Sara Menker quit a career in commodities trading to figure out how the global value chain of agriculture works. Her discoveries have led to some startling predictions: She offers a vision of this impossible world as well as some steps we can take today to avoid it.

2 SLEEP IS YOUR SUPERPOWER BY MATT WALKER

In this deep dive into the science of slumber, sleep scientist Matt Walker shares the wonderfully good things that happen when you get sleep — and the alarmingly bad things that happen when you don't, for both your brain and body. Learn more about sleep's impact on your learning, memory, immune system and even your genetic code.

3 RACISM HAS A COST FOR EVERYONE BY HEATHER C MCGHEE

From her research and travels across the US, public policy expert Heather C. McGhee shares startling insights into how racism fuels bad policymaking and drains America's economic potential — and offers a crucial rethink on what we can do to create a more prosperous nation for all.

4 THE SURPRISING LINK BETWEEN STRESS AND MEMORY BY ELIZABETH COX

You spend weeks studying for a test. On the big day, you wait nervously as your teacher hands it out. You're working your way through, when you're asked to define "ataraxia." You know you've seen the word before, but your mind goes blank. What just happened? Elizabeth Cox details the complex relationship between stress and memory.

5 YOUR BODY WAS FORGED IN THE SPECTACULAR DEATH OF STARS BY ENRICO RAMIREZ-RUIZ

Astrophysicist Enrico Ramirez-Ruiz explains how supernovas forged the elements of life to create everything from the air you breathe to the very atoms that make you.

NOW STREAMING

REGIONAL

ARISHADVARGA (Kannada)

An aspiring actor doubling as an amateur gigolo gets caught up in a sticky situation after accepting a surprise gift from an anonymous client. Cast: Sumyuktha Hornad, Anju Alva Naik
● Watch on: Amazon Prime Video

INSPECTOR VIKRAM (Kannada)

Vikram, a police officer, strives hard to solve every case that comes his way. However, things take a turn when he encounters a criminal mastermind who runs an illegal drug operation.
Cast: Prajwal Devaraj, Bhavana
● Watch on Sunnxt

HERO (Kannada)

A barber stumbles upon his ex-lover in the home of a notoriously bloodthirsty gang leader. Misadventures ensue when he tries to help her escape with the gangster's men in hot pursuit. Cast: Rishab Shetty, Pramod Shetty
● Watch on: Zee 5

EK MINI KATHA (Telugu)

Santhosh, a youth who is struggling with 'Micro Penis Syndrome' marries Amrutha in an unavoidable situation but continues to postpone their first night nuptials. He comes across a Godwoman who has a herbal medicine to address his problem.
Cast: Santosh Shoban, Kavya Thapar, Harsha Vardhan, Shraddha Das
● Watch on: Amazon Prime Video

All the streaming apps can be accessed on smartphones and smart TVs with Internet connection.

ANGREZI MEIN KEHTE HAIN (Hindi)

Yashwant, a middle-aged man, refrains from expressing his love for his wife, Kiran. As a result, their relationship develops cracks and they decide to part ways.
Cast: Pankaj Tripathi, Shivani Raghuvanshi, Anshuman Jha, Sanjay Mishra
● Watch on: Amazon Prime Video

MOHAN KUMAR FANS (Malayalam)

An ex-superstar's chauffeur, friends and family go to great lengths to keep him happy.
Cast: Anarkali Nazar, Kunchako Boban, Vinay Forrt
● Watch on: Amazon Prime Video

BOMBAY BEGUMS (Hindi, series)

Five ambitious women from various walks of life navigate dreams, desires and disappointments in modern-day Mumbai.
Cast: Pooja Bhatt, Plabita Bothakur, Shahana Goswami, Amruta Subhash
● Watch on: Netflix

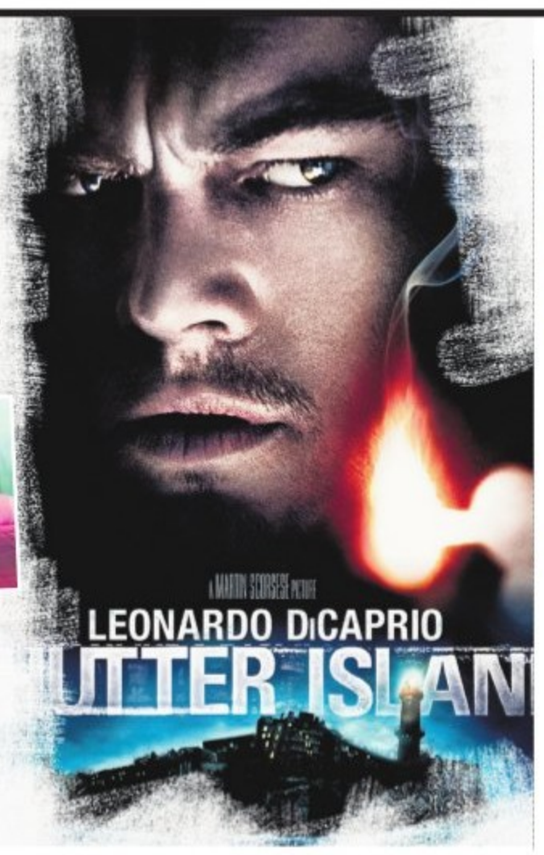
FOREIGN

SHUTTER ISLAND (English)

Teddy Daniels and Chuck Aule, two US marshals, are sent to an asylum on a remote island in order to investigate the disappearance of a patient, where Teddy uncovers a shocking truth about the place.
Cast: Leonardo DiCaprio, Mark Ruffalo, Ben Kingsley, Michelle Williams
● Watch on: Netflix

THE CLEANING LADY (Spanish, series)

Rosa works in cleaning. Your goal is to save your child. That night something strange happens and she is forced to do what she knows: clean.
Cast: Marcelo Arbach, Antonella Costa, Martín Rena
● Watch on: Lionsgate Play



SOLOS (English, series)

Character-driven stories explore the strange, beautiful, heart-breaking, hilarious, and wondrous truths behind what it means to be human.
Cast: Anne Hathaway, Hellen Mirren, Constance Wu, Morgan Freeman
● Watch on: Amazon Prime Video

GHOST LAB (Thai)

After witnessing a haunting in their hospital, two doctors become dangerously obsessed with obtaining scientific proof that ghosts exist.
Cast: Thanapob Leeratanakachorn, Paris Intarakomalyasut, Nuttanicha Dungwattanawanich
● Watch on: Netflix

SUBSCRIPTION

Prime Video: ₹ 129 per month
Lionsgate Play: ₹ 99 per month
Netflix: ₹ 199 per month

Beat pandemic blues with bling

PAIRED WITH PANACHE
Anuja Pandey

PIC: RUNWAY RITUALS

Deepti Kore Aradhya

life is short so buy the ring. Many across the globe have invested in upgrading their wedding rings as the cost of ceremonies came down. Although last year has been challenging due to the lockdown and closure of shops, the jewellery industry, more so fashion jewellery segments, is soaring in terms of creativity and marketing.

We are in the midst of a revolution in terms of equality in gender, LGBTQ rights, race or age segments. Fashion jewellery, or even fine jewellery trends now incorporate gender fluidity. While male jewellery lines have always existed, many brands are coming up with cool, unisex, contemporary jewellery.

"The pandemic has taught us to celebrate life. It's the little moments, be it a birthday or festival, that matter. So self-indulge with a pair of diamond chandelier earrings. Celebrate with colours like yellow, pink and champagne diamonds, or fancy-shaped diamonds such as trillions, ovals, baguettes, princess and hearts," says Deepti Kore Aradhya, jewellery designer and gemologist for Diani. "Why not match your outfit to your jewellery for your Zoom meetings or just lounge with your loved ones wearing something that makes you feel alive and loved?" she adds.

The pandemic has also influenced consumer choices towards minimalist and timeless styles. A Zoom meeting focuses on your background and face, so let the ear adornments do the talking. Some international brands have come up with earpod jewellery as well!

New-age designers are supporting local artists and so, we have more home grown, locally-manufactured jewellery. The founders of Runway Rituals, Netra Jain and Varun Jain are strong supporters of #VocalForLocal. Netra says, "By collaborating with local artisans, we achieve quality worthy of the tag 'Handmade Luxury'. We have a range of earrings, statement jewellery, charms and DIY jewellery, neckwear, embellished scarves, bracelets and even a collection for pre-teens and teens."

So even if you party with sweats below, accessorise the top with some bling or neons on the neck to make up for the Zoom fatigue.

The author is a social media influencer (@loftyspectrums) and lifestyle coach

Salons had a small number of customers right up till the lockdown came into effect on May 10

BEAUTY AND THE COVID BEAST

Hit by the second lockdown in as many years, Bengaluru's beauty industry has gone online to stay afloat and is now seeking government assistance

SANATH PRASAD

Facing the second lockdown in two years, beauty salons and spas in the city are struggling to stay afloat, a situation which has a ripple effect on their employees.

"We were doing well last year after the lockdown and restrictions were lifted. But since the onset of the second wave, our business has been hit very badly," says Manjul Gupta, founder of Bodycraft Spa and Salon.

According to an industry insider, the beauty industry employs close to 20,000 people in Bengaluru and 2.5 lakh people all over Karnataka. Most salons in the city had a small number of customers right up till the lockdown came into effect on May 10, and they've had to find ways to stay afloat. "We are now going online by conducting video consultations on pedicure, manicure, and hair styling for clients," Gupta says.

They have also begun selling beauty products and DIY kits through delivery apps.

Although she gets a lot of requests for hair styling tips from customers, Gupta says video consultations and DIY kits can only do so much. "Visiting the salon is an experience in itself. The same service cannot be created at home," Gupta believes.

Beauty bar Get Gorgeous too has taken things online. Last week, the Bengaluru-based salon chain began offering special manicures, pedicures and other grooming packages to customers via delivery apps. "The proceeds from these services will go into distribution of food, ration and towards people working in cemeteries," says founder Maude Abraham.

In the meanwhile, she is trying to make the best of situation by preparing her staff for when things reopen. "We are beefing up hygiene and ensuring our employees are vaccinated. We will also be distributing self testing Covid-19 kits to customers once restrictions are relaxed," says Abraham.

GlossnGlass plans to charge a nominal Covid fee to cope with increasing costs. "We are incurring additional losses in maintaining hygiene. It includes PPE suits and sanitation services. At the same time, we need to pay rent, our staff, and keep the business running. So, we are planning to charge a nominal Covid safety fee," says Dipanwita Chhabra, co-founder of GlossnGlass.

Some of their staff who hail from the North Eastern states, have not returned since the lockdown last year, and a few more left before the current one was announced, she says.

Pushkaraj Shenai, CEO of Lakme Salon which has 600 employees in Bengaluru, says business was half of what it used to be before the current lockdown. But he believes there is hope. "While the second wave has significantly affected customer sentiment, we are hearing from our clients that they are eagerly waiting to come back," he says.

Shenai, who heads the Beauty and Wellness Association of India which is headquartered in Bengaluru, says they approached the government for help earlier this month.

"Through the association, we have reached out to the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship and the state governments to vaccinate our staff and give us permission to reopen salons with stringent safety measures in place," he says.

BEHIND THE GLAMOUR

- ₹26K crore market size in 2017*
- 6.2 million employees in 2017 (organised market)**
- Over 50% of employees women*

**National Skill Development Corporation report*

***FICCI-EY report, 2009*

Dipanwita Chhabra

We are beefing up hygiene and ensuring our employees are vaccinated. We will also be distributing self testing Covid-19 kits to customers once restrictions are relaxed

- Maude Abraham, founder, Get Gorgeous

CITY READ

Grocery kits distributed

Millennium Group, headed by Dr Mohan Kumar, has extended help to those who have lost their daily wages and livelihood due to the lockdown. They have distributed grocery kits to auto drivers, coolies, garment workers, BBMP health workers and others in need. Thousands of kits have been distributed and will continue to be distributed for three days in and around Basaveshwara Nagar.

Social justice organisation founder passes on

Vinutha Moola, a fighter for Kannada land and culture, passed away on May 27. She was an advocate of job reservation for Kannadigas in the government and corporates. She organised several protests and satyagrahas to urge the government to implement the Sarojini Mahishi Report, which would assure job security to Kannadigas. She was also the founder-president of a social justice organisation called Kannadigara Udyoga Vedike.

In Dune: Imperium, players take roles of various house leaders, gain the most points and prepare for conflict

PLAY ON
Arjun Sukumaran

(Arjun is a gamer, book lover and an all-round renaissance man)

The Expanse might be the new hotness and Star Wars always gets most of the buzz but, when it comes to sci-fi, Dune is still regarded as one of the greats. With hopes high for the upcoming movie, people were nonetheless somewhat skeptical when a card game was announced that was tentatively based on Villeneuve's vision of Arrakis. Well, I've finally had a chance to play it and here's how it goes.

In Dune: Imperium, 1-4 players take on the roles of various House leaders and luminaries in the Dune universe. Your goal is to have the most points at the end of the game, which is triggered once any player has 10 or more points at the end of the round.

Two of my favourite board game mechanics are deckbuilding and worker placement, and Imperium is a wonderful hybrid of both. On most of your turns, you'll deploy one of your agents to the board; however, you must play a card alongside each deployment. That card will give you certain benefits but, more importantly, each card also determines where the accompanying agent can be deployed. Already, you're having to think on a few levels here and that's without taking into account where your opponents might like to go themselves. Of course, they might not have the cards to go there and round and round it goes.

Spicing things up is what happens when you either run out of agents to deploy or choose to pass early. You then reveal the remaining cards in your hand, gaining their 'reveal' benefits (which are different to the benefits they offer when you play them — making that earlier decision even trickier!) and then make your final decisions of the round, which will have ramifications for the rest of the game. First, you can purchase new cards that will go into your deck and offer you additional powers and opportunities, and some of them get more and more powerful when you make alliances with certain factions. Secondly, you will prepare for conflict.

Conflict, as anybody who's familiar with the source material would know, is an integral part of the Dune story and that carries over to Imperium. Each round, players will have to decide how much of their military strength they want to commit to the brewing conflict in the hopes of gaining certain rewards come the end of the round — resources, control of certain areas of the board, or even a precious victory point. Remember, you're only playing to ten points and if that doesn't sound like a lot, that's because it really isn't. Making matters more painful, however, is that all committed troops are lost once a conflict is resolved, whether you win or lose; so full-throttle aggression might carry the day for you once or twice, but you've got to outthink your opponents if you're going to win the war.

A word about the artwork — many licensed games suffer at least somewhat from having to use movie/TV show still images as card art or the like, such as Harry Potter: Hogwarts Battle or Firefly: The Game. Immersion suffers a bit when you're essentially looking at photographs of famous actors, which is why future games of this ilk need to take a look at how Dune: Imperium's done it. Characters are recognisable, and yet the stylised treatment just elevates it a notch; this really should be the benchmark going forward.

When it was released in December last year, Dune: Imperium was greeted with near-universal acclaim. When the hype around a game is so strong, people almost always react with extreme excitement or extreme suspicion — happily, there's plenty of fire here underneath all the smoke because this is a truly phenomenal game. We're not even halfway through 2021 yet, but I genuinely don't think I'll play a better game this year than Dune: Imperium.

WHAT'S NEW?

Lost Ruins of Arnak

Clearly deckbuilding + worker placement is an idea whose time has come, because Lost Ruins of Arnak presents another twist on this emerging genre. Casting you as explorers of a fantastic island, Arnak not only shares a foundation with Dune: Imperium but also has had an equally successful recent launch.

Keystone: North America

We've had a glut of beautiful games with nature-based artwork recently — Parks, Everdell, Wingspan, Flourish, the list goes on. Keystone: North America, which is on Kickstarter right now, looks set to be added to that list, and features some interesting gameplay to go along with its stunning artwork.

Paperback: Adventures

Also currently on Kickstarter, Paperback: Adventures answers a question that nobody ever asked — what would you get if you combined a word-building game with a dungeon crawler? This solo or co-op adventure is based on the excellent gameplay of its predecessor Paperback, and also features the same wonderful art of Ryan Goldsberry.

More o' Omori?

ARE YOU GAME?
Anusha Ganapathi

(This economics graduate spends her leisure time preparing for the zombie apocalypse)

Omori is a "psych horror" RPG game. You might not realise it at first; it lacks the traditional elements that becomes a horror game. It has cute music, kids in a playground, vivid colours, and a lack of jump scares. The horror strikes you very slowly. The game is like a patiently blooming flower. But as the bud slowly unfurls, you see an ugly, huge, hairy black spider sitting at the centre of the flower. And before you react, it jumps at your face. Let me break this down.

Strange: The game does not waste time in setting the scene. We find Omori, a young boy stuck in a 'white-space', a metaphor for his own thoughts. He steps out to encounter a recurring series of adventures with his friends. We soon realise that the world of adventures is significantly different from reality. There are several surreal elements: a house shaped like a shoe, a space world, and made-up creatures. The bizarreness of the world was insufficient to make me realise that it was made-up, and my dense brain was able to comprehend this only when the in-game Pluto introduced himself as an actual planet. Plants could talk, but nobody can convince me that Pluto is a planet!

Sad: The imagined world is silly and playful, but constantly references a darkness. It lurks, like me on Reddit. However, unlike me on Reddit, the darkness is bound to rear its head at the end of this prolonged façade. The conquests with bunnies and space pirates are interjected by hidden phantoms that reveal only little information at any time. Even the turn-based combat system in the game places importance on emotions and reactions. Inflicting attack points also depend on 'follow-up' combos with friends.

Slow: No surprise, but as an RPG game, it contains a commiserate amount of dialogue. Be prepared to spam the 'z' key, if you are playing it on a PC. Despite its length, which might be considered unnecessary, the pace of the game plays a huge role in empathising with the characters. Instead of forcing emotionally heavy conversations on us, the game allows us to explore it through the protagonist's experiences. Interactions cause multiple new paths to emerge, and completing any of these paths provide new revelations on the forgotten story.

Twenty hours in, the gameplay still has more to offer beyond the campaign, but I've had my fill. The conversations start to get quite draggy, and I cannot continue romanticising the quirky dialogues beyond a point. But, I rate the game with 9 health out of 10 juice for the direct attacc on my soul.

'I AM VERY DOMINATING'

Ravichandran, popularly known as the showman of Sandalwood, talks about his upcoming projects, the lockdown and its effect on the cinema industry

A SHARADHAA

RAVICHANDRAN celebrated his 60th birthday on Sunday. A day before the celebrations, the showman of Sandalwood, known for his creativity and out-of-the-box ideas, came up with an innovative video which was a gift to his fans. Calling it 'reel world', the video, which is filled with words and visionary quotes, gave an update of his future projects. From a project with *Ravi Boppanna* in 2021 to a host of other works in 2022, Ravichandran is working on a range of films, many of which have unusual titles.

Take, for instance, *God* which goes with the tagline 'The stone hearted'. The title of his other project is *Sixty -- Living in the Past*, and his third is *Bad Boys — 3 in 1*. In addition, he has also completed Giriraj's *Kannadiga* which is ready for release. Ravichandran will begin shooting for *Drishyam 2* as and when the lockdown is lifted. He will be associating with director S Mahendar for a yet-to-be-titled film. ''I believe in valuing words which I have brought out through this video. Each quote mentioned has two phrases and comes with two different meanings. Sadly, people have lost patience to even go through things and understand. People replied to me with emoticons,'' says Ravichandran.

God and *Sixty*

The actor-director throws light on his upcoming three projects, which are currently being worked on. "My upcoming films might have some philosophical message but the making will be commercial — something that will linger in the minds of viewers," he says, adding, "Post *Ravi Boppanna's* release, I will simultaneously be working on *God* and *Sixty*. While I have finalised the female lead as Pawana for *Sixty*, I am scouting a heroine for my other film, *God*," he says. As for *Bad Boys - 3 in 1*, the commercial entertainer will see the father and his sons — Manoranjan and Vikram — sharing screen space for the first time.

Working with children

Ask Ravichandran whether both his sons are getting involved in the script and direction, and he says a firm 'no'. "That will never happen, they will only listen to me," he says with a chuckle. "This is the first time they are sitting and discussing with me and probably it's because of the lockdown. Otherwise, they don't sit near me. I also want them to learn on their own. But I must say that I am dominating," admits Ravichandran.

'If I have a rupee in my pocket, I will begin shooting tomorrow'

Like other industries, the cinema industry too is struggling. As Ravichandran says, "The industry is looking for work not food kits. I understand there are a few people who are finding it difficult, but most of them want work.I find distributing food kits insulting. On top of that, most are doing it for publicity. If you are doing charity, do it... why do you need to publicise it. All of this is an eyewash," he says, adding that the lockdown should have been implemented earlier in April. "If the government wants people to stay indoors, they should step out to help those in need. When politicians can come out to pay for votes, why not now?," he questions. "I am a person, If I get one rupee in hand, I will begin shooting tomorrow. This lockdown has put everything on hold," he adds.

'I'VE FINALLY GOT THE STAMP OF A GLAMOROUS HEROINE'

CE FEATURES

Pavana, who has bagged a film in Ravichandran's directorial, hopes to use this opportunity well

PAVANA GOWDA is riding high on luck after bagging an opportunity to associate with Ravichandran. The Jatta heroine, who is paired opposite the Crazy Star in Giriraj's directorial *Kannadiga*, is working with Ravichandran on *Sixty -- Living in the past*. The news about her being part of the film was shared by the actor-director in his latest video. "I was selected for his other project *God — The stone-hearted* for which I even auditioned and did a screen test. But then, he felt I fit better into a character for *Sixty*," says Pavana, who has managed to complete one schedule.

The actor recalls her first meeting with Ravichandran when he promoted her debut film, *Gombegala Love*. "His good words created a buzz around the film. Now after so many years I am connecting for not one, but two projects," says Pavana, adding,"Every heroine wants to work with Ravichandran, and though it took a long time, it has finally happened. Now I hope to use this opportunity well."

Being a part of Ravichandran's film has given her the stamp of a glamorous heroine. "I was tagged as non-glamorous until Ravichandran took me on board. Even I had started thinking that I could never be a part of glamorous roles until he gave me that confidence," says Pavana. Having shot a few episodes of *Sixty*, the actor shares, "Getting to the sets of his film was the most-awaited day of my life. I was initially scared that I wouldn't be able to do justice to the role he had sketched for me, but eventually I got comfortable."

The story and concept of the film are new. "From the rushes I have seen, it's something that the Kannada audience has not seen before," says the actor who has completed shoot for over a dozen films, and is awaiting their releases. They include *Mysore Diaries, Prabhutva, Rudri, Thootumadike, Kaliveera, Mehbooba,* and *Fighter*. "The shooting for these films was completed over a year ago. Unfortunately, all of them are on hold because of the pandemic and lockdown. The recent projects I have completed are Saddu and Kannadiga. Now, I am waiting to resume shooting for *Sixty*," she says.

Pavana

Getting to the sets of Ravichandran's film was the most-awaited day of my life. I was initially scared that I wouldn't be able to do justice to the role he had sketched for me, but eventually I got comfortable - **Pavana Gowda, actor**

Huma Qureshi

Twinkle Khanna praises Huma Qureshi's web series *Maharani*

Twinkle Khanna

Actor-author Twinkle Khanna has praised Huma Qureshi's performance in her new web series *Maharani*

CE FEATURES

Streaming on SonyLIV, *Maharani* is a political drama series set in Bihar. Huma's character, Rani Bharti, is an illiterate homemaker who's made the Chief Minister of Bihar. The series is loosely based on the rise of Rabri Devi in the late 90s.

Talking about the show on Instagram, Twinkle praised the 'little-little details' the makers have added to the series. She said it was interesting to see a woman 'not only hold her ground but who was able to dominate the social and political arena.'

Twinkle pointed out how Huma's character remains covered in a ghoonghat at the start, and how it keeps slipping behind as the show proceeds.

"I kept noticing how in the beginning, even her ghoonghat completely covers her and as the show progresses, it keeps slipping a little behind until it is just about covering her bun. To me, these little touches add a sort of realism as well as they show me a journey. It's an engaging story and Huma is just fabulous," Twinkle said.

MX Player's *Indori Ishq* to stream from June 10

CE FEATURES

MX Player's new original series *Indori Ishq* tells a story of unrequited love. Directed by Samit Kakkad, the 9-episode series stars Ritvik Sahore and Vedika Bhandari. It will begin streaming for free from June 10 on the platform.

After the end of his school days, Kunal (Ritvik Sahore) leaves his hometown Indore and moves to Mumbai. He considers himself the happiest man alive - he is in a relationship with his school time crush Tara (played by Vedika Bhandari), he has secured a seat in a top naval college and his parents are incredibly proud of him. Life, however, turns upside-down when Tara dumps him for another guy and Kunal is pushed into a world of pain, insanity and madness.

"My character Kunal is ridiculed for ruining his life over Tara, who has been unfaithful to him," Ritvik shared. "But had the tables been turned - the world would have berated him for ruining a girl's life. I believe that in a relationship, there are two equal halves who need to make it work and the blame or the responsibility should be equally distributed."

The series also stars Aashay Kulkarni, Meera Joshi, Tithi Raaj, Donna Munshi and Dheer Hira.

Chloe Sevigny

Michael Stuhlbarg, Chloe Sevigny join Luca Guadagnino's *Bones and All*

CE FEATURES

Actors Michael Stuhlbarg and Chloe Sevigny have joined the star-studded cast of Luca Guadagnino's *Bones and All*.

Headlined by Timothée Chalamet, Mark Rylance and Taylor Russell, the coming-of-age horror drama is now in production.

The casting reunites Stuhlbarg with Chalamet after Guadagnino's Call My By Your Name, in which he played the father to Elio, Chalamet's character. According to The Hollywood Reporter, Bones and All follows Maren Yearly (Russell) on a cross-country trip in search of the father she's never met, in an attempt to understand why she has the urge to kill and eat the people that love her. The film also stars Andre Holland, Jessica Harper, Francesca Scorsese and David Gordon Green. Based in a novel of the same name by Camille DeAngelis, Bones and All has a screenplay written by Dave Kajganich, who previously worked with Guadagnino on *A Bigger Splash. The Apartment Pictures, Frenesy Film, Memo and 3 Marys* are handling international sales of the film.

Miles Teller to lead Paramount's making of The Godfather series, *The Offer*

CE FEATURES

Miles Teller will replace Armie Hammer to play producer Al Ruddy in Paramount Plus' upcoming series *The Offer,* which recounts the making of one of the most popular movies of all time, The Godfather.

Armie Hammer exited the project in January this year following a series of sexual misconduct allegations against him.

The 10-episode limited series will tell the story of how Ruddy produced *The Godfather* back in 1972.

Nikki Toscano and Michael Toklin are co-writing the series and also serving as executive producers, with Toscano also serving as showrunner. Dexter Fletcher is attached to direct a few episodes in addition to executive producing the series along with Leslie Greif, Ruddy, and Teller. Paramount Television Studios will produce.

Teller is known for his popular credits like *Whiplash, The Spectacular Now, Bleed for This*, and *Only the Brave*. He will soon be seen in upcoming films such as *Top Gun: Maverick* and *Escape from Spiderhead*. On TV, Teller starred in *Too Old to Die Young* at Amazon.